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Verbal Inspiration — a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks

(Continued)

Robert F. Horton is "smitten with amazement at the unob-servant and unintelligent treatment of Scripture which alone has rendered the old theory of Inspiration possible for thinking men." (*Revelation and the Bible*, p. 120.) F. Pieper finds that "the objections to the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture do not manifest great ingenuity or mental acumen, but the very opposite" (*What Is Christianity?* P. 243). Who is right? Let us examine a few more of the absurdities and sophistries employed by the moderns in their polemics against Verbal Inspiration.

No. 13. The moderns deal largely in bare assertions and bland assumptions. — These assumptions do not deserve to be classed with the hypotheses. Both lack proof, but while the legitimate hypothesis at least makes an honest attempt to support itself by pointing to certain facts, the assertions now before us have nothing back of them but the word of their proponents. — We are not now concerned with disproving these assertions. We are simply listing them as unsupported assertion. — Those that have been discussed above are set down here again for the purpose of proper classification; and a few new specimens are added.

1) "God cares not for trifles." That is N. R. Best's assertion. "There is a great maxim dear to the most just and most enlightened legal minds — a maxim drawn from ancient Rome, the mother of the world's jurisprudence: 'The law cares not for trifles.' It is a maxim which theology ought to adopt in honor of the heavenly Father, whose infinite mind is the native home of law as well as of revelation, and whose love desires for mankind no petty securities within tight-closed corrals but abundant life along the wide ranges of a free universe. 'God cares not for trifles.' Certainly it

is an intellect childishly restricted which is able to imagine Him who 'upholdeth all things by the word of His power' sitting in the central rulership of the universe with concern in His thought about the possibility that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John would not get it straight whether Peter denied his Lord to two or only to one of the high priest's serving maids." (*Inspiration*, p. 79.) We will grant that "the law cares not for trifles." But we are asking for proof that, because the law cares not for trifles, God does not care for these so-called trifles of contradictions and errors in the Bible. None is offered. Nothing but rhetorical declamation is offered. We have nothing but Best's word for the axiom: "God cares not for trifles."

2) Best's negative assertion declares in the positive form: Inspiration covers only the Gospel-message, or only the important doctrinal declarations of Scripture. The moderns consider this one of their strongest arguments against Verbal Inspiration. Both the liberals and the conservatives make much of it.¹²⁹⁾ But, as a rule, they offer no proof for it. The Bible nowhere makes the statement that inspiration must be restricted to the truths of salvation. But the moderns take it to be a self-evident truth. They do not care to waste words on proving an axiom. So we have to tell them that we are not minded to accept such a far-reaching statement on their bare word, on the strength of their subjective conviction.

3) We need not be surprised that the moderns who deal with bare assumptions in the most important matters should be guilty of the same presumption with regard to less important, comparatively less important, matters. For instance, the story of Jonah is not a true story but, as H. L. Willett tells us, "is given the mold of a novel. . . . The incidents of the storm, Jonah's deliverance by the great fish (perhaps intended as a symbol of Israel's engulfment and restoration), are the dramatic embellishments of a story with a very definite purpose." (*Op. cit.*, p. 110.) Where is the proof for the statement that a novelist invented the story of the great fish and hid a comforting truth in it? No proof is offered. Prof. J. W.

129) For instance: H. L. Willett (liberal): "The finality and authority of the Bible do not reside in all of its utterances, but in those great characters and messages which are easily discerned as the mountain peaks of its contents. Such portions are worthy to be called the Word of God to man." (*The Bible through the Centuries*, p. 289.) Joseph Stump: "The holy writers were inspired with a supernatural knowledge of God and of His will, and on these subjects their words are final and infallible. On scientific matters they neither knew, nor professed to know, more than other men of their day." (*The Christian Faith*, p. 319.) *The Lutheran*, Feb. 22, 1939: "The Holy Scriptures are the infallible truth 'in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation,' but on secular matters the "Bible writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs."

Horine writes in the *Lutheran*, March 18, 1937: "The book [Jonah] is considered to be not literal history but parable or allegory. . . . So Jonah (Israel) was disgorged from the mouth of the great fish (Babylon)." Where is the proof that the writer of this book did not expect his readers to take these occurrences as facts but knew that they would find an instructive parable in it? Pure romancing on the part of the moderns, and they want us to accept *their* romance as true. And Professor Horine goes on to tell us that the Lord's reference to this story does not prove it to be a true story. "He is simply using it as an illustration. . . . Just as we refer to the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan in precisely the same terms we should use *were their adventures historical facts*" (our italics), "so may Christ have done here." Where does Christ indicate that He is treating this story as a parable? We are certainly not ready to accept the mere *dictum* of men as valid proof. Another statement by Willett: "There are three books in the Hebrew Scriptures which have the appearance of works of fiction written with a definite bearing on current thought and intended to be tracts for the times. They are Ruth, Jonah, and Esther. . . . These are Biblical romances." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 102, 107.) To us they do not appear to be romances. Whose word counts for most?

4) They do indeed offer proofs for the unhistorical character of the Book of Jonah, but these proofs, too, consist of nothing but bare assertions and assumptions. First, in answer to our objection that the Hebrews would hardly admit a book of fiction into their sacred canon, they remind us of "the inveterate love of romance common to the ancient Jews with the other nations of the East." Granted that the ancient Jews and the other nations of the East had an inveterate love of romance,—the nations of the West have it, too,—that has no bearing on the question. Love of romance will not permit a religious people to justify a pious fraud in sacred matters.¹³⁰⁾ And then they point out, as corroborating the theory that the story is a parable that "the belly of a sea-monster is actually used in Jeremiah (51:34, 44) as a figure for the captivity of Israel." Again: "The myth of the sea-monster is preserved not only in the story of Jonah, but in fragmentary allusions to the leviathan, Rahab, and the dragon, in Job 3:8; 26:12, 13; Is. 51:9; cf. 27:1." Is the reader

130) R. A. Redford: "Mr. Cheyne remarks (in *Theol. Rev.*, XIV, p. 213) that 'ordinary readers, especially when influenced by theological prejudice, are unable to realize the inveterate love of romance common to the ancient Jews with the other nations of the East.' Yet surely, if that were so, it would make the fact of the admission of a mere book of fiction into the canon all the more inexplicable, for the compilers of Scripture, knowing the prevailing tendency, would be careful to exclude such a book. . . . Thirdly, there is the difficulty of reconciling such a legend about a great prophet, given in his name, with his character, unless it were true." (*Studies in the Book of Jonah*, p. 36.)

able to see the connection? Redford says: "A theory of this kind is based upon so many assumptions that it demands almost implicit faith in those who put it forth." (P. 39.) "We protest against the random assertions of the critical school." (P. 66.)

5) The Bible-story of the Creation, of the Temptation, and the Fall get the same treatment as the story of Jonah. It is said to be against the spirit of the Bible to take these stories literally; they are myths indeed, but myths which teach important spiritual lessons. They speak of "the majestic creation myth" (Georgia Harkness). "For myself, I think it (Gen. 1) holy ground" (H. E. Fosdick, *Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 52). "They declare that what has been called the fall of man, original sin, and the devil, these are, at best, great mythological theories." (J. S. Whale, *The Christian Answer to Prayer*, p. 35.) "Gen. 3 is a didactic poem." (See *Religion i. G. u. G., s.v. Suende.*) "The explanatory myth of Eve and the apple." (S. McDowall, *Is Sin Our Fault?* P. 234.) J. M. Gibson asks men to "recognize the marvelous grace of God in so lifting up the best legendary literature of the world, such as the story of the Garden of Eden or of the Fall, as to make it the vehicle of high and pure revelation"; and T. A. Kantonen chides those who "have regarded the stories of the Temptation and the Fall as mere historical narratives rather than profound prophetic philosophy of history" (see p. 252 above). Indeed? Where does the Bible say or indicate that? Once more we are asked to take their word for it.

6) Higher criticism, which is responsible for 3), 4), 5), is made up almost entirely of bare assertions and mere assumptions. There is, for instance, the great Redactor. We are supposed to believe in his existence and work on their mere word. Their fiat created him. And how do you know that the various documents which were finally fused into the documents that make up the Bible really existed? Ask the higher critics.¹³¹⁾

131) Read again Prof. J. J. Reeve's statement. "These presuppositions and assumptions are the determining element in the entire movement.... The use of the Redactor is a case in point. This purely imaginary being, unhistorical and unscientific, is brought into requisition at almost every difficulty." (*Fundamentals*, III, p. 98.) And hear Prof. W. H. Green, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (p. 572): "The alleged diversity of diction, style, and conception is either altogether fictitious or is due to differences in the subject-matter and not to a diversity of writers. The continuity and self-consistency of Genesis, contrasted with the fragmentary character and mutual inconsistencies of the documents, prove that Genesis is the original of which the so-called documents are but several parts. The role attributed to the Redactor is an impossible one, and proves him to be an unreal personage. And the arguments for the late date of the documents and for their origin in one or the other of the divided kingdoms are built upon perversions of the history or upon unproved assumptions" (See Dr. L. Fuerbringer's article on this point in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1898, p. 206 ff.)

7) Higher criticism again: "It is probably due to the influence of Q that Mark locates the temptation at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, omitting details; but from Matthew it is evident that the story is a piece of apocalyptic symbolism, evidently 'literary' in conception, though doubtless originally oral in form. . . . This [the Transfiguration] is either an account of a resurrection appearance which has been antedated and shifted back into the Galilean ministry, or it is the account of some ecstatic experience born of exalted faith, told and retold in terms similar to the accounts of the Resurrection and hence influenced by the latter." (Quoted from Frederick C. Grant's *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, in *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1940, p. 553.)

8) Some more higher criticism romancing. The writer of the article "The 'Cursing' of the Fig-Tree" in the *Luth. Church Quarterly*, April, 1936, assumes the role of the Redactor of Mark. "The condition of the story is singularly chaotic. . . . In some instances it becomes possible to reconstruct with a fair degree of probability an earlier form of a given incident than the one which Mark presents. . . . It is obvious that, if food had been lacking in Bethany, the disciples would have been hungry, too, and the story would almost certainly have disclosed the fact in some way. There is no such indication. Apparently Jesus was the only one who 'hungered.' . . . Nothing is said in the story about the owner of the tree. . . . Jesus is now said to have deprived the owner of his tree, not only without due process of law, but apparently without a thought." The Redactor then tells us how Matthew edited the original story and that "it is possible that this parable of Luke's (13:6-9) may have been the kernel from which Mark's story sprouted," and that the true story is simply this, that Jesus saw a dying fig-tree and said it would soon wither away, and so it did; the next morning it *was* withered away, and "Peter saith unto Him: Rabbi, behold, the fig-tree is withered away."

9) H. E. Fosdick asserts: "It is impossible that a book written two or three thousand years ago should be used in the twentieth century A. D. without having some of its forms of thought and speech translated into modern categories." (*Op. cit.*, p. 129.) One of these antiquated forms of thought is the belief in the resurrection of the flesh. Another is the "ascription of many familiar ailments to the visitation of demons" (p. 35); as S. Cave puts it: "Where Paul speaks of 'demons,' we speak of 'neurosis,' 'complexes,' and 'repressions'" (*What Shall We Say of Christ?* P. 55). For the purposes of the present section it will be sufficient that we match Fosdick's assertion with the counter-assertion: It is possible for men of the twentieth century to employ the Biblical forms of thought. In addition, we point out that the proof offered by Fos-

dick and Cave for their assumption is also nothing but an assumption: where is the proof that the "demons" Paul speaks of were common ailments?

10) True, these assumptions are frequently introduced with a "perhaps." "Jonah's deliverance was *perhaps* intended as a symbol." Mark's Redactor speaks of "a fair degree of probability." H. L. Willett answers the question "What is the Q on which the gospels are said to be founded?" thus: "It is one of the documents which scholars *have assumed* as a source, . . . *perhaps* in Aramaic, . . . *possibly* from the hand of Matthew himself." (*The Christian Century*, March 2, 1938.)¹³² We give due credit to the honesty which inspires the cautious "if" and "perhaps." But we have to point out that the higher critics are making these hypothetical assertions with a purpose. They are thereby paving the way for later dogmatic assertions. And they are certainly asking for some sort of credence for their suggestions. — Whether they introduce their assertions with an "if" or a "verily," they are asking us to subscribe to their guesses.

This, then, is the situation: we are denounced as obscurantists for believing the *dictum* of God and are invited to accept as true the *dictum* of men. We are asked to discard the oracles of God on the strength of the oracular assertions of men.¹³³ The result would be

132) *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1940, p. 551, quotes from *The Gospel of the Kingdom*: "If, as also seems probable, the Marcan pericope is based upon, or at least echoes, a section in Q, then perhaps the later evangelists were really justified in both these assumptions, viz., . . ." and comments: "Providing we admit several 'ifs,' 'editors,' 'later hands,' 'as is probable,' plus 'glosses,' and 'copyists making errors,' with a few hasty generalizations thrown in, we can arrive at any conclusion we want, preserving at the same time an appearance of great critical acumen." H. M'Intosh: "Professor Schmiedel's article in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* abounds with his 'may be,' 'might be,' 'possible.' 'The alleged occasions of utterance *may really have been* confusions of two or more occasions. . . . Some of the words *may not have* proceeded from Jesus directly.' . . . If such hallucinations and ratiocinations were to be tolerated, then, *anything may be*, and verily the world *may* rest on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, the tortoise on nothing, as Schmiedel in *vacuum* certainly does. . . ." (*Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* p. 408.)

133) L. Gaussen: "Critical science does not keep its place when, instead of being a scientific inquirer, it would be a judge; when, not content with collecting together the oracles of God, it sets about composing them, decomposing them, canonizing them, decanonizing them; and when it gives forth oracles itself!" (*Theopneustia*, p. 324.) We shall not blame M'Intosh for dealing severely with the "writers who denounce every independent man that, after the example and on the authority of Christ and of His inspired apostles, would dare to uphold the Bible claim or to differ from the false but oracular assertions, or to refuse the infallible *ipse dixit*, of those presumptuous speculators who are vain enough to claim for their own crude, ephemeral productions what they deny to the oracles of God." (*Op. cit.*, p. IX.)

that men treat great stories of the Bible as romances and accept the romancings of the critics as true.

So we have this situation: the moderns have been telling us that the facts in the case are against Verbal Inspiration. We ask them to produce these facts. And here they are offering us a lot of assumptions!

No. 14. The moderns operate quite a bit with sophistries. We have already noted a number of cases of fallacious reasoning. Some of these, with a few additional ones, are set down here for a more particular examination.

The moderns operate with this argument: Not all parts of Scripture are of equal value; it follows that not all parts of Scripture are inspired or, as they sometimes put it, equally inspired. J. M. Gibson declares that they "who insist on every part of the Bible being equally inspired" fail in their "duty of giving the Gospel its due place of prominence" (*The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture*, p. 101). S. P. Cadman wrote in the *Herald Tribune* of New York: "Do not regard the books of the Bible as infallible in every particular or of equal value in all their parts." (See *The Presbyterian*, July 12, 1928.) The Alleman manifesto makes the defenders of Plenary Inspiration say: "All Scripture is on the same level. . . . One word is as important as another." (*Luth. Church Quarterly*, 1940, p. 354.) The meaning of these declarations is that, if a man believes that all parts of the Bible are inspired, he will have to teach that all parts of the Bible are on the same level of importance. — There is a fallacy in the argument, for the relative value of a statement has no relation to the fact of its inspiration. The argument is a prize *non sequitur*. And this is the consequence of the sophistry: Verbal Inspiration is made ridiculous. Gibson carries the ridicule so far as to pity the poor preacher who "might preach on the Bible for fifty years and never once bring the gospel in," "on the principle of all parts of Scripture being equally inspired" (*loc. cit.*). Somebody is certainly taking a ridiculous position.¹³⁴

Next: Paul himself said that Inspiration did not keep him from human error; he said: "We have this treasure in earthen ves-

134) M'Intosh: "Nor does the advocacy of inerrancy require or imply holding the equality in value of all parts of Holy Writ, as has so often falsely been averred. . . . In actual fact and in habitual conception they hold them to be equally true and inerrant, but not equally important. . . . The simple-minded earnest Christians regard the Scriptures, and the Church has ever regarded them, as of almost infinitely diversified value, — just as Creation is, though every part and particle of it is nevertheless the product of God." And now pay attention to the further remark: "Yes, it is because they hold it to be all inspired of God, and therefore all inerrant, that they hold all to be of real though not of equal value; which the others do not and cannot." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 463 f.)

sels."¹³⁵) — But St. Paul is not referring to Inspiration here. When Paul speaks of inspired words, he tells us that they are supplied by the Holy Spirit, not by man's wisdom; they are unaffected by human frailty; they are words absolutely true. Here he is praising God for carrying on the work of the ministry of grace through weak vessels, frail men.¹³⁶) It is contemptible sophistry to make out of a true statement of Paul a statement which he would denounce as false. The pettifogger employs such tactics. He tries to make the witness say that black is white.

Note the sophistry contained in the following statement: "I am not overlooking the passages of Scripture quoted by Calvinistic theologians in support of their doctrine of Scriptural infallibility. . . . The point here that is relevant to our thought is that even such supernatural guidance would not render these written reports any more certain than human language can be. . . . Of the earth, earthy, its words carried by men to facilitate their understanding, description, and cooperative control of earthly things, human language simply cannot be a literal vehicle for conveying God's infallible will and wisdom to men. . . . We have found that, if God should super-

135) J. M. Gibson: "The defenders of the authoritative inspiration of the Scriptures have postulated as a necessity of the case the emancipation of all the writers of Scripture from the effects of human weakness and limitation." But "the treasure is in earthen vessels. . . . We cannot claim perfection for any of the organs or vehicles of inspiration." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 32, 144.) G. L. Raymond: "'We have this treasure,' says Paul in 2 Cor. 4:7, 'in earthen vessels.' . . . Now, if all other earthen vessels — crystals, flowers, and animals — leave some of their material influence upon the evident divine plan to shape them in accordance with a divine law, why should not the human mind also leave some of its more powerful mental influence upon the truth which the mind receives, transmits, and, to a certain extent, interprets?" (*The Psychology of Inspiration*, p. 154.) The following statement shows that the moderns make use of St. Paul's words to support not only the thesis that the Bible contains mistakes but also their thesis that the imperfections and mistakes in Scripture enhance the value of Scripture (Assertion 7). W. Sanday: "We do not think it likely that God would allow the revelation of Himself to be mixed up with such imperfect materials. But we are no good judges of what God would or would not do. *His ways are not our ways.* Out of the imperfect He brings forth the perfect. It is so in the world of nature, and it is so in the world of grace. *We have our treasure in earthen vessels.* The vessels may be earthen, but the treasure which they contain is divine. . . . If the Bible had been so [more perfect than it is], it could never have been in such close contact with human nature. Its message could never have come home to us so fresh and warm as it does. As it is, it speaks to the heart, and it does so because, according to a fine saying in the Talmud, *it speaks in the tongue of the children of men.* . . . The body, the outward form, may be of the earth, earthy, but the spirit by which it is pervaded and animated is from heaven." (*The Oracles of God*, p. 29.) — Italics in the original.

136) See Kretzmann's and Lenski's commentaries. Luther: "Our hands and tongues are indeed perishable and mortal things, but through these means, through these perishable and earthen vessels, the Son of God wants to exhibit power." (VI: p. 144.)

naturally reveal Himself and His teaching to men, this revelation could not be absolute or infallible to any finite man. (R. W. Nelson, in *Christendom*, IV, p. 400 ff.)¹³⁷⁾ The sophistry consists in the subtle mixing up of the terms "absolute," perfect, and "infallible," true. True enough, the infinite cannot be compressed into, and expressed by, the finite. Human language cannot express the *full* meaning of divine things. But only the unwary reader will be led by Professor Nelson to conclude therefrom that God is unable to give us, by means of the human language, a *true* knowledge of divine things. In the words of Dr. Pieper: "We have not, indeed, a full, complete, perfect knowledge of God, but we do have a *correct* knowledge, such as befits the weakness of the earthly life. . . . The 'absolute knowledge of God' belongs to the *sine mente soni* [sounds without sense] with which the vocabulary of certain philosophers and philosophizing theologians abounds." (*Chr. Dog.*, II, p. 40.) When God gave man his language, He took care to supply it with all the terms needed to express so much of the divine wisdom as we need to know at present, to know with absolute certainty. Gibson's quips about the heavenly language, the "perfect language" in which a "perfect revelation" would have to be written, and the "miraculously reconstructed humanity" called for by this "unknown language" (see preceding article, Note 108) reveal his ignorance of the distinction between *full* knowledge and *correct* knowledge. Note also the equivocation in his use of the term "whole truth." The Bible does not reveal the whole truth; we know only "in part"; and there are divine mysteries which we shall never fathom. On the other hand, the Bible *does* reveal the whole truth, all and everything we need to know for our salvation.

It should also be pointed out that, in elaborating his statement that "such supernatural guidance would not render these written reports any more certain than human language can be," Professor Nelson confines himself to the discussion of whether spiritual things can be revealed in human language. But "the Calvinistic [Lutheran, Biblical] doctrine of Scriptural infallibility" covers not only what Scripture says concerning God's will and wisdom, concerning divine things, but also what Scripture says concerning earthly things, scientific, historical matters and the like. Many, perhaps most, of the attacks against the inerrancy of Scripture are directed against the latter class of statements. And now Professor Nelson makes the *general* statement that inspiration would not render

137) G. L. Raymond has a similar statement: "The exact fact seems to be that the spiritual, which is infinite in its nature, necessarily becomes finite when limited, or — what is the same thing — made definite by being expressed — and too often *suppressed* — in terms applicable only to material conditions." (*Op. cit.*, p. 308.)

these written reports any more certain than human language can be. The statement is too sweeping. Whether anything certain can be said about divine things we have just discussed. But will any one question, will Professor Nelson question, whether human language is capable of expressing earthly things in exact language? Whatever the limitations of human language are, the holy writers, the Holy Ghost, found very exact words to set forth the fact that Jesus was born while Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Here is the statement that heaven and earth were created in six days. Human language has no words, indeed, to *define* "created," but it has the facilities to express the fact that in six days God created heaven and earth in exact terms. The ax-head did not sink. Any doubt in the mind of any linguist about the meaning of these words? No human words can explain the miracle, but the inspired language on this point is not subject to the least doubt. The least that Professor Nelson could do was to say in a footnote: "My statement is too sweeping. I should have said that on many points in dispute between the inerrantists and the errorists the written records speak a language which is certain and exact."

The sophistry hidden — clumsily hidden — in the assertion that Luke's statement concerning his careful historical investigations proves that he did not claim inspiration for his writing has received sufficient attention. See Assertion No. 2, c. The same with regard to the distinction made between "factual truth" and "religious truth" (parables, etc.). See Assertion 2, d and Assertion 4, b. But our task is not yet finished. Other sophistries need attention. And because these are put forth with particularly loud clamor and receive great popular acclaim, we shall discuss them in separate sections.

No. 15. The statement that the Bible is out of harmony with science finds wide acceptance. It is bandied about as an axiomatic truth.¹³⁸⁾ But it is not a true statement. It is a sophistry, and men accept it so readily only because they fail to see the equivocation with which it operates. (1) The term "science" is used as equivalent to the term "scientists." What the scientists say, or rather, to use precise language, what some scientists say, is labeled as the findings of science. And many are enmeshed by the sophistry. They know that science does not lie. What is established as a fact

138) H. L. Willett: "Nor were the writers of the Bible safeguarded supernaturally or in any other manner from the usual historical and scientific errors to which men of their age were liable." (*The Bible through the Centuries*, p. 284.) A. J. Traver: "Does not modern science contradict the Scriptures?" (*The Lutheran*, Feb. 22, 1939.) Clarence Darrow, at a forum conducted in St. Louis, May, 1931: "The various parts of the Bible were written by human beings who had no knowledge of science, little knowledge of life, and were influenced by the barbarous morality of primitive times."

— and the sole business of science is to establish facts — must remain a fact. The Bible cannot deny facts, cannot be out of harmony with science. And now certain “findings” of renowned scientists which the Bible does deny are presented to them as the findings of science, and thoroughly bewildered, they conclude that the Bible is out of harmony with science and cannot be the inerrant Word of God.

What they should say to the moderns is this: “We must wait for science to have reached a settled conclusion before any legitimate argument or any well-grounded objection to the Bible can be fairly deduced from it. How opposite to this and how inconsistent with candor and common sense the course usually pursued by opponents of revelation, we need scarcely pause to describe. As soon as any idea has been started by some scientific man which seems to conflict with the received view of Christians, — an idea thrown out, perhaps, as a mere conjecture, or a theory, novel, peculiar to himself, and as yet untested, — some are ready to exclaim, and to trumpet it in all the newspapers: ‘Ah, Moses was mistaken! The Bible is in error! The learned Professor So-and-so has just discovered it. There can be no mistake about it *this* time. Science never lies!’ True, science never lies. And so, figures never lie; but they often deceive, they are often misinterpreted and misapplied. Our inference, our understanding, our observation of the facts, or our induction from the facts may have been fallacious.” (B. Manly, *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 239.) The Bible does not contradict a single established fact of science. The statement that the Bible is out of harmony with science should read: The Bible is out of harmony with pseudoscience. What Solomon says about the ants is declared to be false by a certain number of scientists, not by science.

2) While some cite certain spurious facts against the Bible, others operate with spurious findings deduced from facts, alleged or real facts. In the statement “The Bible is out of harmony with science” the term “science” is sometimes used as an equivalent with speculative science, “inductive science.” But that is an equivocation. Science deals only with the truth; the conclusions of “inductive science” are in many cases false. They are the result not of observation but of reasoning, and the reasoning of the scientific philosopher is often at fault. Since the Fall the reasoning power of man is greatly impaired.¹³⁹⁾ And we are certainly not going to accept some of the deductions and all of the speculations of fallible scientists as absolute truth. But these speculations are being

139) “Freilich, liebe Freunde, wenn die Vernunft noch waere, wie sie Gott den Menschen anerschaffen hat, dann waere sie ein Licht, das uns leuchten koennte.” (*Proc., Western Dist.*, 1865, p. 56.)

labeled as "science," and playing upon the respect we have for science, the sophists hope that we will buy their goods as having real scientific value. Surely we know that what real science teaches is true and cannot be in conflict with the Bible.¹⁴⁰ But science *in concreto*, that including the theories and guesses of the scientists, cannot claim the dignity and authority of true science. We will not be duped by the identification of these two terms attempted by the moderns.

We tell them, in the words of Dr. S. G. Craig: "It is one thing to say that the Scriptures contain statements out of harmony with the teachings of modern science and philosophy and a distinctly different thing to say that they contain proved errors. Strictly speaking there is no modern science and philosophy, but only modern scientists and philosophers — who differ endlessly among themselves. It is only on the assumption that the discordant voices of present-day scientists and philosophers are to be identified with the voice of science and philosophy that we are warranted in saying that the Bible contains errors because its teachings do not always agree with the teachings of these scientists and philosophers. Does any one really believe that science and philosophy have already reached, even approximately, their final form?" (See L. Boettner, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 62.) When they reach their final form, — in heaven, — they will agree with the Bible.

3) The statement that Scripture is out of harmony with science is applied to a special case when the moderns declare that the advanced scientific knowledge of our age has rendered the belief in miracles ridiculous. We have examined the statement that "science does not recognize miracles" under Assertion No. 8 and found that it operates with the fallacy of the *μετάβασις*. We are now pointing out that it operates with the fallacy of equivocation. Recall R. Seeberg's statement "In those days it was easy to believe in miracles. Every one feels at once how far we have advanced beyond the naive views of the men of antiquity. . . . The Biblical writers did not possess the exact knowledge of the cosmic laws which we have." Hear H. E. Fosdick seconding him: "An ax-head might usually sink in water, but there was no reason why God should not make it float if He wished to do an extraordinary thing. It was surprising when He did it, but it presented no intellectual problem whatever. No laws were broken, because no laws were known. No Hebrew

140) Dr. Walther: "We know for certain that there is no contradiction and that there can be no contradiction between Christian theology and TRUE science, science in abstracto." Walther adds, of course, that "nevertheless we do not by any means regard it as the task of the theologian, nor as possible at any time, to bring our Biblical theology into harmony with science as it exists in *concreto*" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1875, p. 41. See Pieper, *op. cit.*, I, p. 191).

had ever dreamed of such a thing as a mathematical formula of specific gravity in accordance with which an ax-head in water ought invariably to sink." (*Op. cit.*, p. 137.) Right, says A. Harnack in his *Wesen des Christentums*: "Als Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs kann es keine Wunder geben." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1902, p. 31.) Others ridicule, on the same grounds, the belief that God rules sickness and health and at times directly intervenes for the good of His people. A. G. Baldwin: "The attributing of the various plagues to the direct intervention of a God offers difficulty to any one whose knowledge of modern science gives him a different concept of cause and effect. But we must remember that these stories were not written in a scientific era." (*The Drama of Our Religion*, p. 49.) J. S. Whale: "The view that God antecedently wills the lightning stroke, shipwreck, cancer, cannot save itself, especially in a scientific age. It is a matter of common observation that 'Streams will not curb their pride The just man not to entomb, Nor lightning go aside To give his virtues room; Nor is that wind less rough That blows a good man's barge.'" (*The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil*, p. 33.) Now, when these men claim that science discredits the miracles of the Bible and the miraculous interventions of God, they are making the same equivocal use of terms as we noted under (1) and (2). It is a *spurious* philosophy, a *spurious* science, which they call in as witness for their side. And their witness cannot qualify as an expert.

Besides, the statement under consideration operates, like all sophistries, with a truth which becomes a half-truth and with fallacious deductions. It is true that science has made great advances. But it has not advanced quite so far as Seeberg's argument calls for. J. A. Thomson told us that we know "only a few of the real laws of nature." Dr. A. Lorenz informed us that the farther the medical scientist advances in his studies, the more he "realizes how little he knows." Our medical men confess that they do not know exactly how the plague originates and how it spreads and ends. A thousand questions of sickness and health have them baffled. So Seeberg and Whale are operating with half-truths.

And it is less than a half-truth when Fosdick declares that the action of the ax-head and the other miracles "presented *no intellectual problem whatever*" to Elisha and the other prophets. The prophets and the apostles were not quite so "dumb."

But we will grant that the Biblical writers knew less than we do with regard to such things as the mathematical formula of specific gravity. (Be careful, however, even here; you know little on the question of how much less they knew.) What does that prove for Seeberg's and Fosdick's contentions? Nothing. All the advances that science has made and will make have no bearing on

the question of miracles and any other direct intervention of God. What you know about the cosmic laws — even if you had a full knowledge of all the cosmic laws — does not give you the right to ask for the floor when this question is debated. The miracle is not a problem of science. — By the way: if the prophets' belief in miracles had been due to their lack of scientific knowledge, how will you account for the fact that leading men of science today find it possible to believe in the direct intervention of God? — Do not appeal to science in order to make the prophets ridiculous! You are making yourself ridiculous by committing the fallacy of citing the cosmic laws against the miracles. In a court-room you would be stopped by the objection: "Irrelevant!"

The second fallacy is committed when they use the "cause and effect" argument. To be sure, every effect has a cause, but every effect does not have a *natural* cause. The fact that the rising streams in Whale's poem usually entomb the careless traveler — that is a law of nature — does not prove that supernatural causes cannot nullify the natural effect of the torrent. The argument used by Whale and the others is called the fallacy of accident.

4) Practical application. We shall not revise the Bible for the purpose of harmonizing it with "science." We are asked to do that. Charles Gore says "it is disastrous to set religion in antagonism to science or to seek to shackle science, which is bound to be free." (*The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 8.) But that does not appeal to us. It would not be scientific. For the assertion that Scripture is not in harmony with science rests, as we have seen, on an equivocation. There is no room in true science for equivocations, untruths. And it would not be the Christian procedure. We heard Dr. Pieper say that it is unworthy of a Christian to let human opinions correct the Word of God (*op. cit.*, I, p. 577). It is, therefore, as we heard Dr. Walther say, not the task of the theologian to bring theology into harmony with science, as it exists *in concreto*. That would be disastrous. Those who make the practical application of the false theorem under consideration and attempt to harmonize Scripture with science by deleting what some scientists do not like suffer a terrible loss. "Modern theology, fearful for the future of the Church, has made an appeasement with science. It has agreed to retain and maintain only so much of Scripture and the Christian doctrine as will pass the test of 'science.' . . . The result is that modern theology has lost the divine truth. It has renounced Holy Scripture as the infallible truth and the sole authority and corrupted all the chief articles of the Christian doctrine, taking the very heart out of them." (*Proceedings, Delegate Synod*, 1899, p. 34.) If you think that the Bible-theologian Pieper is here using immoderate language, hear Georgia Harkness: "Then

liberal theology came to terms with science, purging religious thought of much error" (a liberal is speaking), "but moving so far in the direction of capitulation to the scientific method that it almost lost its soul." (*The Faith by which the Church Lives*, p. 142.)

No. 16. The quibble: "The Bible is not a text-book of science" is used to buttress the contention that the Bible does not claim exactness and infallibility for everything it states, that inspiration covers only spiritual matters and does not extend to scientific matters. Dr. A. J. Traver: "The Bible is true in all matters that pertain to religion. It is not a text for biology or for chemistry. It knows nothing of electricity or of airplanes. There is no reason that it should. These are matters for the investigation and discovery of the human mind." "It is not necessary that men should know how to fly in order to be saved from their sins. Bible-writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs. *The one thing that they were called to do was to reveal God to men.*" "Inspiration includes only the knowledge essential for knowing God and His plan for man. It would seem absurd to turn to the Bible for knowledge of electricity or biology or chemistry or any of the sciences. In this field of human knowledge, men can discover truth by searching after it." (*The Lutheran*, Jan. 23, 1936; Feb. 22, 1939; May 10, 1939.)¹⁴¹⁾

The moderns make much of this argument. They never fail to use it. You can hardly find a modern treatise on the inspiration and fallibility of Scripture in which the author does not, sooner or later, produce the clinching argument "The Bible is not a text-book of science." Here the conservatives use the same language as the liberals. "Nor were the writers of the Bible safe-guarded supernaturally or in any other manner from the usual historical and scientific errors to which men of their age were liable. Their work is not a text-book on either of these subjects. . . . They referred to the facts of nature as they were known in their day. But the

141) Similar statements. J. Stump (U. L. C.): "It must be borne in mind that the Bible is a religious book, and not a text-book on science. The holy writers were inspired with a supernatural knowledge of God and of His will; and on these subjects their words are final and infallible. On scientific matters they neither knew, nor professed to know, more than other men of their day." (*Op. cit.*, p. 319.) R. F. Grau (*Lutheran, Koenigsberg*): "If the morality of the Old Testament is imperfect, how can we attribute perfection to things which have much less relation to the kingdom of God, such as its cosmological, astronomical, chronological ideas? These things must rather be judged by the canon which Jesus set up in the words: 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?' (Luke 12:14.) Jesus would ask you, and I ask you: Who has given you the right to look for cosmology, astronomy, etc., in the Bible, which is the book of salvation, of faith? Here the rule applies: Render unto science and cultured progress the things which belong to science, and to God and faith the things that belong to faith." (*See Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 327.)

themes with which they were concerned were not in these areas." A liberal wrote that, H. L. Willett. (*Op. cit.*, p. 284.) But J. Stump might have written it. He did write the equivalent. H. E. Jacobs might have written it. "According to H. E. Jacobs," says Stump, "the Holy Scriptures are the infallible and inerrant record of God's revelation of His saving grace to men." The holy writers were not inspired, however, to be 'teachers of astronomy or geology or physics.' " (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 86.) — They present the argument in various forms. For instance: "Nobody in his senses ever went to *Jesus* for the latest news in physics or astronomy," says H. E. Fosdick (*Op. cit.*, p. 269), and Prof. J. O. Evjen: "Christ came not to teach science. . . . The Bible is not an authority on geology, surgery, agriculture, law" (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 24), and Prof. F. Baumgaertel: "Christ never claimed that His knowledge of scientific matters was infallible, and science has a perfect right, in judging historical questions and matters connected with the origin of the Old Testament, to disregard the judgment of *Jesus*" (see W. Moeller, *Um die Inspiration der Bibel*, p. 50). — They set up the acceptance of this axiom with its implication as the mark of genuine Lutheranism. C. A. Wendell: "Lutheranism means three things: . . . (2) Faith in the Holy Scripture, not as a fetish, on the one hand, nor a mere human document, on the other, nor as an arsenal of theological polemics nor as a text-book of history and natural science, but as the inspired Word of God, whose purpose it is to make us wise unto salvation." (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 242.) A. R. Wentz: "Neither will the Lutheran theologian regard the Bible as a text-book on any subject except the special revelation of God in *Jesus Christ*. . . . The spirit of essential Lutheranism does not rime with the literalism of the Fundamentalist, which makes the Bible a book of oracles, a text-book with explicit marching orders for the 'warfare between science and religion.'" (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 91.) W. Elert: "Die orthodoxe Dogmatik nahm die Schrift trotz ihres Inspirationsdogmas — oder auch dadurch verfuehrt — als Lehrbuch ueber alle darin vorkommenden heterogenen Inhalte. . . . Immerhin war hier aus der Bibel, die Luther als Gesetz und Evangelium las, ein naturwissenschaftlicher Kanon geworden." (*Morphologie des Luthertums*, I, pp. 51, 377.) — They cannot get along without it. They need it for their own peace of mind. Having established to their own satisfaction that the Bible is not reliable in its scientific statements, they quiet their apprehensions as to the general reliability of the Bible by taking refuge in their dogma: The Bible does not claim plenary inspiration and full inerrancy. Examine Dr. Stump's statement "The holy writers were not inspired to be 'teachers of astronomy or geology or physics (Jacobs)', and no number of contradictions in

this sphere would 'shake our confidence in the absolute authority of Holy Scripture as an inerrant guide in all matters of faith and practice (Jacobs).' They think, too, that they need it in order to save the reputation of the Bible and keep men from skepticism. The article "Is the Bible a Text-Book on Science?" in *The Presbyterian* of July 19, 1928, speaks of "the oft-asserted apology so timidly spoken in the hope of saving the Bible from the ruthless destruction wrought by the critics and the scientists, an apology which runs thus: 'We do not accept the Bible as a text-book on science, but we do accept it as a guide to religion and life.' When in the presence of higher critics these same religionists admit: 'We do not accept the Bible as a text-book on history, but we do accept it as a guide to religion and life.'" That describes the situation correctly. Hear, for instance, J. M. Gibson. Speaking of "the theory that Scripture was given to acquaint people with astronomy, geology, history, and everything else under the sun, and above it, too," he warns us that that "raises a host of difficulties which no ingenuity can completely remove and men like Tyndall and Huxley are forced into skepticism. . . . Make the demand that it must be a scientific revelation, and you put innumerable weapons into the hand of the enemy" (*op. cit.*, pp. 91, 169 ff.). — Indeed, they make much of this axiom of theirs. W. Sanday sums up for the moderns: "The Biblical writers were not perfectly acquainted with the facts of science: is it certain that they would be more perfectly acquainted with the facts of history?" But be of good cheer: "It is coming to be agreed among thinking men that the Bible was never meant to teach science and that the Biblical writers simply shared the scientific beliefs of their own day." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 25, 27.)

But all of this is sophistry. The reasoning is fallacious. The fact that Scripture is not a text-book of science has no bearing on the question whether its scientific statements are true. We are not now considering the fact that Scripture claims infallibility for all of its statements. We are examining the statement of the moderns that, since Scripture does not present itself as a text-book of science, it cannot be permitted to claim accuracy for its scientific statements. And we shall say that that statement is devoid of logic and common sense. No man in his senses will say that the historical data presented by a reputable historian are, of course, reliable (so far as a human writer can claim reliability) but that, when he trenches upon the domain of natural science, he is under suspicion, for he is merely a historian. When a statesman writes a paper on the international situation, will you say that, however right he may be on political questions, his historical references are *eo ipso* less reliable than those of a historian? Dare you presume that, however careful he is in his political statements, he permits

himself to become careless in stating historical facts? Moreover — and this is addressed to the conservatives among the moderns — how are you going to prove your thesis that, because the purpose of Scripture is to make us wise unto salvation, not to give us a course in astronomy, etc., the Holy Ghost was careful about matters of doctrine but on scientific matters left the prophets to their own devices and permitted all sorts of inaccuracies and errors to mess up His Holy Scriptures? You must prove — not merely assert — that such a mode of procedure was naturally to be expected of the Holy Ghost. We say it is unreasonable to expect that. Dr. Pieper: "It is a foolish objection against the inspiration of Holy Scripture when modern theologians state that the Bible is no text-book of history or geography or natural science and that for this reason it is self-evident that inspiration could not pertain to the historical, geographical, and natural-history statements. . . . It is indeed 'no text-book of the natural sciences.' Its true purpose is rather to teach the way to heaven by faith in Christ, 2 Tim. 3:15; John 17:20; 20:31; Eph. 2:20-22. But where it does, even though only in passing, teach matters of natural history, its statements are incontrovertibly true according to John 10:35." (*Op.cit.*, pp. 265, 384, 577.)¹⁴² And there is no reason in the world why John 10:35 should not apply to *all* of Scripture. There is no known law of reason that compels us to say that, because the Bible is not an astronomical treatise, its astronomical statements are subject to doubt. Dr. Stoeckhardt's judgment on Grau's argument is: "Was ist das fuer ein Wirrwarr! Und was ist das fuer eine Logik!"

Notice the sinister sophistry. Through an ambiguous use of terms the statement "The Bible is not a scientific treatise" is made

142) Dr. L. S. Keyser: "Sometimes you hear men say that the Bible was not written to teach science. That is true when properly qualified, but it is not sweepingly true. The Bible was not meant to teach science as a scientific text-book, but even the lay mind can see that, wherever the Bible makes statements that belong to the scientific realm, its statements ought to be correct, to agree with what is known to be true in scientific research." (In the *Luth. Church Review*, quoted in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1905, p. 140.) Dr. M. Reu: "Scripture is no text-book on history or archeology or astronomy or psychology. But *does from this follow* that it must be subject to error when it occasionally speaks of matters pertaining to that field of knowledge?" (In the *Interest of Lutheran Unity*, p. 70.) We call special attention to the following paragraph from D. J. Burrell's *Why I Believe the Bible* (p. 52) because it points out the fatal consequences of the contention under discussion. "It is a common thing to hear it said: 'The Bible was not intended to be a scientific book,' giving the impression that it makes little difference, therefore, whether its scientific affirmations are correct or not. This, however, is not a matter of small moment. If the book is not veracious in this particular, what ground have we for committing ourselves to its spiritual guidances? . . . The question is not whether the Bible was intended to be a scientific book or not, but whether the Bible is true. It is not true unless it is true and reliable every way."

to mean, "Its statements are not scientifically correct," and the mind of the simple is confused. The thought is suggested: A text-book of science uses exact language; does it not? The Bible is not such a text-book, is it? Therefore you need not look for exactness in the Bible on some subjects — and plenary inspiration must be given up.

Examine, too, the argument that "in this field of human knowledge, men can discover truth by searching after it," or, as N. R. Best puts it: "When, pray tell us, did God ever make to man a gratuitous present of information which man could by any pains search out for himself?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 82.) That is beside the question. What is there, pray tell us, to hinder God from putting, through inspiration, His divine authority between the scientific statements in question? The holy writers may have known some of these things (not all of them, by any means) through observation. But it pleased God to guarantee the truth of it to us.

Again, the employment of caricature always betrays a sophistical intent. When Gibson speaks of the "theory that Scripture was to acquaint people with astronomy, geology, history, and *everything else under the sun, and above it, too*," and Best asks: "Can three pages of duodecimo print (this Genesis prolog) be a compendium of universal origins?" (*Loc. cit.*), and Prof. W. H. Dunphy states that "the worshiper of the letter insists on treating them as an *encyclopedia of universal information*" (*The Living Church*, Feb. 18, 1933), they misrepresent our position. The Bible does make some scientific statements but does not claim — nor do we claim for it — that it gives universal information. These men are befogging the issue.

They argue, furthermore, from unproved premises. They assume that the Bible is concerned only with religious truths, not with scientific truths. While they are trying to prove this assumption (against the explicit declaration of Scripture that *all* Scripture is inspired and true), we shall go a step further and tell them that what Scripture says on historical, scientific matters, and the like, subserves its religious teaching.¹⁴³⁾

143) Dr. Stoeckhardt: "These seemingly extraneous matters are throughout put by Scripture into relation with faith, are matters that belong to God and faith. . . . Does not the account of Gen. 1 touch the specific Christian faith? Do the Gentiles and the Turks confess together with us Christians the first article of the Christian faith?" (*Loc. cit.*, pp. 327, 332.) J. A. Cottam: "In the first chapter of Genesis the Bible speaks with authority, clearly, and finally on a matter of biology . . . as a matter of the greatest religious importance" (*Know the Truth*, p. 69). J. G. Machen: "People say that the Bible is a book of religion and not a book of science, and that, where it deals with scientific matters, it is not to be trusted. . . . I should like to ask you one question. What do you think of the Bible when it tells you that the body of the Lord Jesus

And finally, back of it all is the *assumption* of scientific errors in the Bible. The entire discussion runs around a mistaken notion. All the energy expended in trying to show why the Bible is little concerned about the exactness of its scientific teaching is wasted effort. As long as the premise is not proved, they are engaged in idle discussions.

If anything more should be said on this subject, we'll say this: No, the Bible is no text-book of science; it is something infinitely better than any text-book of science. All of its scientific statements are reliable. Scientific text-books have to be rewritten every few years. But not a single paragraph of the Bible needs to be revised. If any statement in the text-books is confirmed by the Bible, then you can absolutely rely on it. Again: the Bible supplements these text-books most helpfully. *Science for the Elementary-School Teacher* brought up the question about the origin of human intelligence and speech, but was unable to give the teacher the needed information. The Bible gives it. J. Stump is wrong when he says that the holy writers did not know more on scientific matters than other men of their day. On some things they knew, by revelation, much more. On the origin of this world Moses knew more than the men of his day and many men of our day. — And here they are filling the world with the cry: The Bible is not a text-book of science! ¹⁴⁴⁾

No. 17. The variant-readings sophistry. The contention is that we have no reliable Bible text and that, consequently, Verbal Inspiration must go by the board. Theodore Kaftan: "The number of the variant readings is legion; there is no fixed text; it must give the verbal-inspirationist quite a jolt when he realizes that no one, not even he himself, is able to say which text is the one that is verbally inspired." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 287.) N. R. Best: "On the hypothesis here outlined the revelation of God perished from the earth ages ago — being destroyed by the incompetence of those who transcribed it from one manuscript to another and rendered it out of its original languages into the tongues of the nations. The logic

Christ came out of the tomb on the first Easter morning nineteen hundred years ago? . . . Account would have to be taken of it in any ideally complete scientific description of the physical universe. . . . Is that one of those scientific matters to which the inspiration of the Bible does not extend? . . ." (*The Christian Faith in the Modern World*, p. 54 f.)

144) Luther: The only book in which no historical [or scientific] errors can occur is the Bible. See XIV:491. — Dr. A. Graebner: "The Bible is not a text-book of zoology or biology or astronomy, claiming for itself the authority secured by the most careful and extended human investigation, observation, and speculation. Its claims are infinitely higher. The authority of human scientists is never more than human; that of the Scriptures is everywhere divine. The omniscient Creator knows more about His handiwork than any created mind. Etc." (*Theological Quarterly*, VI, p. 41.)

of this is that we today have no Bible at all to which any divine authority can be attributed." (*Op. cit.*, p. 78.) J. Aberly: "If it was necessary to eliminate all such errors from the original records, would it not seem to be just as necessary to guard against their creeping in through their transmission? . . . 'God in His wisdom may have given to His people in early ages an absolutely inerrant book, but that His providence has failed to preserve.'" (*The Luth. Church Quarterly*, 1935, p. 125.) Lyman Abbott presents the case thus, and it could not be better presented: "An infallible book is a book which without any error whatever conveys truth from one mind to another mind. In order that the Bible should be infallible, the original writers must have been infallibly informed as to the truth; they must have been able to express it infallibly; they must have had a language which was an infallible vehicle for the communication of their thoughts; after their death their manuscripts must have been infallibly preserved and infallibly copied; when translation became necessary, the translators must have been able to give an infallible translation; and, finally, the men who receive the book must be able infallibly to apprehend what was thus infallibly understood by the writers, infallibly communicated by them, infallibly preserved, infallibly copied, and infallibly translated. Nothing less than this combination would give us today an infallible Bible; and no one believes that this infallible combination exists. Whether the original writers infallibly understood the truth or not, they had no infallible vehicle of communicating it; their manuscripts were not infallibly preserved or copied or translated; and the sectarian differences which exist today afford an absolute demonstration that we are not infallibly able to understand their meaning." (*Evolution of Christianity*, p. 36 f. Quoted in Foster, *Modern Movements in American Theology*, p. 99 f.)

Now, the appearance of a legion or legions of variant readings does not jar our belief in Verbal Inspiration in the least. According to the first form of the present argument the condition of the copies renders the alleged inspiration of the originals doubtful or even illusory. It certainly does not. The fact that our copies offer a multitude of variant readings has no bearing on the Scriptural thesis that everything written by the holy writers was verbally inspired and remains verbally inspired. We insist that these two matters be kept separate. Let it be that the copyists did not do their transcribing by inspiration; nobody claims that. But the question before us just now is: Were the originals written by inspiration? And the fallibility of the copyists certainly does not affect the infallibility of the prophets and the apostles.

No modern will deny this self-evident truth, put in this bald form. When pressed, the moderns produce the second form of the

argument. We notice, however, that their discussion of the variant readings has a tendency to get back to the question of the *inspiration of Scripture*. By implication and insinuation doubt is being cast on the verbal inspiration of the original documents. Charles Hodge makes the statement "Many of them [the discrepancies] may fairly be ascribed to *errors of transcribers*" (*Systematic Theology*, I, p. 169), and the former owner of my copy of the book at once wrote on the margin: "What in these cases becomes of *verbal inspiration*?" And when Hodge states on the next page that "the writers were under the guidance of the Spirit of God . . . and the Sacred Scriptures are so miraculously free from the soiling touch of human fingers," our annotator points to the "errors of transcribers" and asks: What, then, becomes of verbal inspiration? The same idea is put into print by Dr. H. C. Alleman: "At best the theory of a mechanical verbal inspiration can apply only to the original manuscripts of the authors themselves and not to copies, and surely not to translations. Now, we do not have the original manuscripts; the Holy Spirit did not preserve them. What we do have in the original languages are copies, manifestly faulty. Critical scholars have found ten thousand diversities in the preserved manuscripts of the Old Testament and 150,000 in the New Testament, a total of 160,000 in the Bible. So the theory of a mechanical verbal inspiration simply falls to pieces." (*The Luth. Church Quarterly*, 1936, p. 247.) Note the "*at best*," italicized by us, and note that "the theory of a mechanical verbal inspiration" which has "fallen to pieces" is the teaching that the originals were written by verbal inspiration. Note also the "if" in Dr. Aberly's statement: "If it was necessary to eliminate such errors from the original records. . . ." Dr. J. A. Singmaster writes: "Another startling fact contradicts the dictation theory, and that is the numerous various readings in the several manuscripts. While these do not vitiate the Scriptures in the least, they do show that God did not seem to require that every word must be miraculously preserved as originally written." (*Handbook of Christian Theology*, p. 67.) What is the "dictation theory"? The teaching that the words written *by the apostles and the prophets* were verbally inspired; and, says Dr. Singmaster, the various readings in the copies prove that this teaching cannot stand. Dr. J. A. W. Haas uses pretty plain language. "The early position of Protestant doctrine put an infallible Bible over against an infallible organization. *It is supposed*" (our italics) "that the original manuscripts of the books of the Bible were without error in every detail. No one ever saw or can prove such an infallible set of books, but their existence is made an article of faith. Actually Christians have always had a Bible that contains many variant readings." (*What Ought I to Believe*,

p. 28 f.)¹⁴⁵⁾ The subtle suggestion is that somehow or other the legions of variant readings must cause doubts as to the verbal inspiration of the originals. So let us settle this point once for all. The fact that a copyist misspelled a certain word or substituted a different word does not make the original word uninspired. The fact—and this is an apt analogy—that human nature is now corrupt does not alter the fact that man was created perfectly holy. You know this; you concede it when pressed for a definite statement. And we shall hold you to your concession. You have lost the right to mix up with your discussion of the faulty copies any discussion of the originals. All “ifs” and “buts” based on the copies are ruled out by mutual agreement.

Furthermore, we are not ready to discuss the faulty copies with any one who does not admit the infallibility of the originals. When Dr. Abbott presents his list of “infallibilities” to us, we stop him after the first item: “In order that the Bible should be infallible, the original writers must have been infallibly informed as to the truth; they must have been able to express it infallibly.” Surely; but do you, Dr. Abbott, believe that they did write by inspiration? When he says No, and when others say: “God *may have given* to His people in early ages an absolutely inerrant book,” we refuse to continue the discussion. First the question of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible must be settled between us. Unless that is settled, our conversation on the errors of the copyists and translators and printers can reach no satisfactory conclusion. It is evident that, when one party accepts the inspiration of the Bible as an established truth and insists that the errors in the copies cannot overthrow that fact, while the other party insists on constructing the doctrine of inspiration from the condition of the copies, the two parties are talking along different lines, and the talk will go on interminably. And there are practical considerations behind our insistence on settling, first and before anything else, the question of the infallibility of the holy writers. Much is gained, everything is gained, when a man has been convinced, by

145) The same idea was expressed and applied not only to Verbal Inspiration but also to faith in Christ, by Prof. E. W. E. Reuss, of Strasbourg, who, when a student had handed in an essay in which he maintained his faith in the plenary and literal inspiration of Scripture, told him: “My dear friend, the arguments of science do not affect you because the subject in question is in your eyes a matter of faith. Well, allow me to say to you in the name of the faith you propose to defend that the ground on which you have taken your stand is an extremely dangerous one. To identify faith in Christ with the historical belief that is bound up with Biblical documents is to enter on a path which may lead you very far. The least weakening of your theory of the Canon will shake the whole superstructure of your Christianity, and the reaction may be as subtle as it will be radical.” (Quoted, with approval, in R. F. Horton, *Revelation and the Bible*, p. VI.)

Scripture, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Such a man will stand firm when the shock-troops — the legions of various readings — are unloosed upon him. And only such a man is in a position to take up the study of these variants (textual criticism) profitably. A man who takes a negative attitude towards the inspiration of Scripture will hail these legions as helpful allies; he who takes a doubting attitude will quickly surrender to them.

Our first concern is to get men to listen to what Scripture says on Verbal Inspiration. To that we devote most of our time. We do not, of course, absolutely refuse to discuss anything else. If men insist on constructing the doctrine of inspiration from the condition of the copies, we shall devote some little time to that angle. We'll do that presently. But all along we shall keep on stressing the main points, first, that Scripture teaches Verbal Inspiration and, second: the fact that the copies are somewhat faulty does not prove and does not indicate that the originals were faulty.¹⁴⁶⁾

The moderns, in general, admit that. As a rule, they put their variant-reading-argument in this form: there are legions of variant readings; it follows that we have no fixed, no authentic, no reliable text; and from that it follows that Verbal Inspiration is a dead issue. Dr. A. E. Deitz puts it this way: "Manifestly, we cannot be guided by a book which is no longer available, however perfect and inerrant and infallible it may have been." (*The Luth. Ch. Quarterly*, 1935, p. 130.) Another modern puts it still more bluntly: "We have been dwelling in the traditional text as in an ancient, comfortable house; the spirit of our fathers ruled there and made it comfortable and cozy. Now comes the building inspector, condemns the building, and demands that we move out." The old house is "rotten, rickety, in a tumble-down condition." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, I, p. 414.)

146) Dr. A. Hoenecke: "A further objection: Since we certainly do not possess the original text throughout, verbal inspiration cannot be predicated of the Bible throughout. Ein wirklich toerichter Einwand! They must have a poor case if they have to resort to such subterfuges. They fail to distinguish between the inspiration and the preservation of the inspired Scriptures. . . . Even though we admit that in several passages we do not have the inspired text, that disestablishes the inspiration of the original Scriptures as little as the present corrupt condition of man does away with the creation of the first man in the image of God." (*Ev.-Luth. Dog.*, I, p. 386.) Dr. W. Dau: "If in a copy of the Bible that should fall into the hands of Pastor Montelius one leaf were missing, the Bible would not on that account be defective. If in the translation which we have something should have been rendered incorrectly, the Bible would not on that account be faulty. If the manuscripts that have been preserved till our time should in some cases be undecipherable, or some mistake of a copyist should be found in it, the Bible would not on that account be erroneous." (*Theol. Mthly.*, 1923, p. 75.)

Let us examine this second form of the argument. We shall find that it is an unwarranted generalization to say that on account of the legions of variant readings our present Bible text is doubtful and unreliable. Note, in the first place, the tendentious overstatement, the sophistical exaggeration in the argument. These legions of variant readings consist, as the textual critics tell us, for the greater part, by far the greater part, in variations in the spelling and the like, which do not in any way affect the sense, things about which no serious man would make a fuss. Such for instance, are "the variations in the spelling of proper names: Ναζαρέτ—Ναζαρέθ. . . . Among other insignificant variations may be mentioned the presence or absence of *v* final in verbs: ἔλεγε—ἔλεγεν," and so *ad infinitum*. (A. B. Bruce, *Exp. Gr. Test.*, I, p. 52 f.)¹⁴⁷ This class of variant readings does not jolt us. These legions make a great din, but as they come closer, we find them to consist of tin soldiers. What the moderns say of the havoc wrought by these armies is of the same value as some of the war-bulletins being issued by the high commands.

Next, some of these variants do indeed affect the sense. Some—a few. Do not keep up your sophistical practice of exaggerating! There are only a few that affect the sense, as the textual critics tell us. "It is reckoned that of the seven thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine verses of the New Testament there hardly exist ten or twelve in which the corrections that have been introduced by the new readings of Griesbach and Scholz, as the result of their immense researches, have any weight at all. Further, in most instances they consist but in the difference of a single word, and sometimes even of a single letter." (L. Gaussen, *op. cit.*, p. 190.—Examine the exhaustive lists given in that chapter.) Ten or twelve verses—and our war-bulletin writers speak of "legions"! And now mark well: these few variants which do effect the sense in no case affect any Scriptural doctrine. For instance, the variant θες or ο for θεός in 1 Tim. 3:16 are certainly not equivalents. But reading "who" for "God" in no wise affects the doctrine of the deity of Christ. This doctrine is abundantly established by the host of the other *dicta probantia*. Let 1 John 5:7 be an interpolation; does that fact give the doctrine of the Trinity the least jolt? Some im-

147) "The miracle of inspiration is not perpetuated in those who have copied and translated the Scriptures, though the accepted translation is so entirely free from fundamental error that fairness must conclude that God has wonderfully preserved the purity of the original text in the transmission. Prof. Moses Stuart, one of the ablest scholars of modern times, says: 'Out of some 800,000 various readings of the Bible that have been collected, about 795,000 are of about as much importance as the question in English orthography is whether the word *honor* or *Savior* should be spelled with a *u* or without it.'" (*Proc., Southeastern Dist.*, 1939, p. 27.)

portant manuscripts omit the clause ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ in John 3:13. Delete it, and Scripture still teaches that the Son of Man is and was in heaven. "There are instances where, if a certain variant is accepted, the passage no longer proves a certain doctrine. But the remarkable thing is that these instances occur only in cases where this doctrine is firmly established by many other passages." (*Proceedings, Synodical Conf.*, 1886, p. 66.) The fact is that "the wonderful divine providence so held its protecting hand over the Bible text that in spite of the *variae lectiones* not a single Christian doctrine has become doubtful." (Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 290.)¹⁴⁸ The text of the Bible is in such a condition that in every instance where we need a plain, direct, clear statement of doctrine or important fact, the text is there — clear and uncorrupted. The bombs which the legions of the variant readings discharged against the certainty of the text are duds. This talk about the dilapidated condition of our Bible home is justly characterized by Dr. Pieper as "frivolous talk, flowing from ignorance."

Note, in the second place, the fallacy in the generalization: The Bible text, as we have it, is not reliable because of the variant readings. There is doubt, to be sure, about the reading of some passages. But we shall never grant that that fact casts doubt on the reliability of the ten thousand passages about which there is no doubt. The textual critics — and they need not be verbal-inspirationists — will not stand for such insinuations of the moderns. They do not speak of *the* Bible text as unreliable. *They* speak of an established, authentic, accepted text. And so shall we. The moderns are unreasonable. Take a reasonable view: God certainly wanted the churches of today to have the same advantage as the first churches, which had the original manuscripts, written by the apostles. God wants all churches of all times to have a certain, sure Word, expressed in a certain, sure text. Now, if the fact that there are variant readings would deprive us of a reliable Bible

148) Prof. Moses Stuart: "Of the remainder some change the sense of particular passages or expressions or omit particular words or phrases; but not one doctrine of religion is changed, not one precept is taken away, not one important fact is altered, by the whole of the various readings collectively taken." (*Loc. cit.*) "Richard Bentley, the ablest and boldest of the earlier classical critics of England, affirmed that even the worst of manuscripts does not pervert or set aside 'one article of faith or moral precept.' . . . And Dr. Ezra Abbot of Harvard, who ranked among the first textual critics and was not hampered by orthodox bias (being a Unitarian), asserted that 'no Christian doctrine or duty rests on those portions of the text which are affected by the differences in the manuscripts; still less is anything *essential* in Christianity touched by the various readings. They do, to be sure, affect the bearing of a few passages on the doctrine of the Trinity; but the truth or falsity of the doctrine by no means depends upon the reading of these passages.'" (B. Manly, *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 224.)

text, would God have permitted these variants to occur? Is this rationalizing? Well, then listen to Christ's own guarantee that the Church of later days shall have a good text, perfectly good and reliable. John 17:20 guarantees that the word of the apostles will remain in the possession of the Church, the word of the apostles as transmitted to the Church in a reliable text. And when Christ asks His disciples of the later days to continue in His Word (John 8:31, 32) and to teach all things He commanded (Matt. 28:20), He promises them a good, reliable, absolutely reliable text; else they could not know His Word. And He has kept His promise.¹⁴⁹⁾

The broad statement that the Church of today must get along with a corrupted, unreliable Bible text does not express the truth. It does not agree with the facts.¹⁵⁰⁾ And it does not proceed from the Christian way of thinking, from Christ's way of thinking. In spite of the variants found in the Old Testament Christ said: "They have Moses and the Prophets" (Luke 16:29); they have a reliable text. And when He appealed to the *text as written*, "we do not read," says Dr. Pieper, "that the devil brought up the matter of 'various readings'" (p. 288). *Summa summarum*, "what the

149) The Lord took special care of this matter. No, He did not endow the copyists with miraculous infallibility, but we are going to say that it is a miracle before our eyes that the text has been so faithfully preserved. We speak of "the wonderful, miraculous divine providence guarding the text." "We truly stand before a miracle of divine providence." (F.A. Philippi. See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 409.) "God has wonderfully preserved the purity of the original text in the transmission." (See above.) "Very wonderfully and very graciously," says J.G. Machen, "has God provided for the preservation, from generation to generation, of His holy Word. . . . You do not have to depend for the assurance of your salvation and the ordering of your Christian lives upon passages where either the original wording or the meaning is doubtful. God has provided very wonderfully for the transmission of the text and for the translation into English." (*The Christian Faith in the Modern World*, p. 43 f.) "The Lord has watched miraculously over His Word," says Gausson (*op. cit.*, p. 167), who asks us to compare the Bible in this respect with any other book of antiquity ("the comedies of Terence alone have presented thirty thousand variant readings; and yet these are only six in number, and they have been copied a thousand times less often than the New Testament") and to meditate on the saying of Bengel: "Thou mayest, then, dismiss all those doubts which at one time so horribly tormented myself. If the Holy Scriptures — which have been so often copied and which have passed so often through the faulty hands of ever fallible men — were absolutely without variations, the miracle would be so great that faith in them would no longer be faith. I am astonished, on the contrary, that the result of all those transcriptions has not been a much greater number of different readings." (*Op. cit.*, p. 196.)

150) These are the facts: "The best of the present-day Hebrew and Greek scholars assert that in probably nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand we have either positive knowledge or reasonable assurance as to what the original words were; so accurately have the copyists reproduced them, and so faithfully have the translators done their work." (L. Boettner, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 19.)

Church lacks in our day is not a reliable text of the Bible, but the faith in the sufficiently reliable text" (p. 410. — Be sure to read the two sections in Pieper on this subject, I, pp. 286 ff. and 408 ff.).

No, the few variants — by now we are agreed that the various readings which amount to anything are but few in number — jolt us as little as the obscure passages in the Bible disturb our faith. The Bible contains some *cruces interpretum*, but we have never permitted the Romanists to adduce this fact as a proof for their dogma of the obscurity of Scripture. We cannot be absolutely sure whether the ἐπευῶνται in John 5:39 is the indicative or the imperative. Does that justify any man to deny the clarity of Scripture? And the occurrence of a few variants is not a sane argument against the integrity of the text of the Bible. The Protestants among the moderns will not receive a jolt if the Romanist should argue: Since there are some obscure passages in the Bible, the whole Bible is obscure. Then they should not try to jolt us by employing the same line of argument: Since the text in some instances has been corrupted, the Bible text is unreliable.¹⁵¹⁾

Here is a variation of the second form of the argument: We no longer have the original manuscripts; they may have been — or were — inerrant by virtue of Verbal Inspiration; but since we possess only copies, made by fallible men, it is a waste of time to discuss Verbal Inspiration; it has no practical value. — The exam-

151) Prof. J. P. Koehler: "Es moegen in einzelnen Stellen Unklarheiten entstehen, so dass man die Stellen gerade nicht bestimmt auslegen kann. In den meisten Faellen bezieht sich das auf aeuessere sprachliche Dinge, oder es betrifft feine Schattierungen der Gedankenverbindung, auf deren Feststellung wenig ankommt, soweit es die Lehre betrifft. Man wird die Stellen dann zu den sogenannten dunklen Stellen rechnen, wenigstens in dieser Hinsicht. Aber der Klarheit der Schrift, soweit es sich um die Lehre handelt, tut das deshalb keinen Eintrag, weil die betreffende Lehre entweder schon in solcher Stelle oder sonstwo in der Schrift klar vorliegt. . . . Es kann der urspruengliche Text durch die Abschreiber verdorben sein, dadurch dass sie Woerter absichtlich oder unabsichtlich einschoben. Da entsteht wieder die Frage, ob diese Tatsache uns den vorliegenden Bibeltext nicht zweifelhaft mache. . . . Manche Leute meinen, es sei nicht noetig, auf dem Wortlaut zu bestehen, weil er ja doch nicht gewiss ist. Doch das folgt nicht. Das bleibt stehen, Gott hat sein Wort durch den Heiligen Geist eingegeben, so dass kein Tuettel davon hinfallen kann, und wir bestehen darum bei der Auslegung auf dem Wortlaut, wo er feststeht. In andern Faellen aber geben wir uns wiederum nicht mit Wortklauberei ab, sondern lassen solch aeuessere Dinge dahingestellt, um so mehr, als die Wahrheit der Lehre doch nicht davon abhaengt. Dass es mit der aeuesseren Gestalt der Schrift so steht, das gehoert mit zu ihrer menschlichen Niedrigkeit. die von Gott jedenfalls damit zugleich sozusagen in Kauf genommen wurde, dass er seine Offenbarung in menschliche Rede durch Menschen kleiden liess. Es ist daher eine unverstaendige Ueberschaetzung solcher rein menschlichen Dinge, wenn sich jemand dadurch in seinem Glauben an die Unfehlbarkeit der Schrift in jedem Wort, das geschrieben ist, wankend machen laesst." (*Der Brief Pauli an die Galater*, p. 37 f.)

ination of this argument will take us over the old ground, indeed, but it will do no harm to *emphasize* some of the old points.

We heard Dr. J. A. W. Haas say: "No one ever saw or can prove such an infallible set of books," and heard Dr. A. E. Deitz repeat it: "Manifestly we cannot be guided by a book which is no longer available, however perfect and inerrant and infallible it may have been." Let us hear Dr. E. H. Delk repeat it. Discussing the statement by Dr. W. A. Maier: "I challenge any one within the range of my voice to show that the Bible, as originally inspired by God, contains even a minute mistake," he says: "This is a retreat to an impossible citadel in order to defend an unnecessary point of view of what is essential to Christianity. If we had the Bible 'as originally inspired of God,' this challenge might be of some force." (*The Luth. Church Quarterly*, 1936, p. 426.) This slur about an "impossible citadel" is played up by W. M. Forrest in this wise: "No one can attack a non-existent fortification. The autographs [of the Bible] are nowhere; no man living can prove what was in them, and no man dead has left us any record of what they were like when he read them. . . . All we have is our existing Bible. If it needed to be inerrant, why did God allow it to become errant after having gone to the trouble of getting it all miraculously written out without error? . . ." (*Do Fundamentalists Play Fair?* P. 55 f.) The commissioners of the U. L. C. A. played it up in their report to the convention of 1938: "The disagreement [on the doctrine of verbal inspiration] relates, furthermore, to a matter of theological interpretation, which, in addition, applies only to a non-existent original text of the Scriptures." (See *The Lutheran*, Oct. 5, 1938.) And the presidential address at the same convention stated: "The crucial difference developed in recent discussions rests in the matter of the verbal inspiration of an original text of the Scriptures (which, of course, does not exist)."

These flippancies call for a few remarks. (1) "No one ever saw such an infallible set of books." Neither did any one of us see Christ. Does it follow that our knowledge of Christ is faulty? We know as much of the power and love and beauty of Christ as those who saw Him with their physical eyes. If you admit *that*, you will no longer argue *that*, because you have not seen the original manuscripts, you cannot know whether they were without error in every detail.¹⁵²⁾

152) D. J. Burrell: "We have heard the higher critics saying: 'What is the use of affirming inerrancy of an "original autograph" which is not in existence? The theory that there were no errors in the original text is sheer assumption, upon which no mind can rest with certainty. We must take the Scriptures as we have them, without reference to a hypothetical original which no living man has seen.' It is a poor rule, however, which cannot be made to work both ways. No living

2) "What is the use of affirming inerrancy of an 'original autograph' which is not in existence?" The question has only academic interest. — No, it is a question of great importance, of the utmost importance. We want to know whether the words that Paul wrote down were (and are) the very words of God, by virtue of verbal inspiration. We want to know that today. For if the words of the apostles, in the original autographs, were not God's words, words of power, life, and salvation, then the copies, written or printed, could not transmit to us divine words. In the article "Have We the Original Text of the Holy Scriptures?" (CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., X, p. 105 ff.) we read: "If the original manuscripts of the holy writers were inerrant, then it was at least possible for scribes to transmit an inerrant message to posterity. If the original writings were (and not merely contained) the Word of God, then the copies transmit to us the Word of God in the degree in which they are faithful to the original. If the original manuscripts were not, but merely contained, the Word of God, accuracy of transcription did not avail to render that divine which was not divine. Yes, a great deal depends on the nature of the original." (Be sure to read the entire article!)¹⁵³ The moderns think they can get along with an errant Bible. But to us the question of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the Bible as originally written, is a matter of vital importance. — It is of some importance, too, to the textual critics. They are devoting much time to the labor of restoring the original text. For many of them it is a labor of love. And they have more than a literary interest in it. They would lose their real interest if they knew that, after they had improved the faulty copies, they got nothing but a faulty Bible.

3) "No man dead has left us any record of what they [the

man has ever seen the incarnate Word. There is no accurate portrait of Him in existence — certainly not if the Scriptures are unreliable. Nevertheless we do believe that the original Christ, who for a brief period of thirty years lived among men and then vanished from sight, was 'holy, harmless and undefiled'; precisely as it is claimed the Scriptures were in their original form." (Op. cit., p. 122.)

153) Dr. James M. Gray: "Some would argue speciously that to insist on the inerrancy of a parchment no living being has ever seen is an academic question merely and without value. But do they not fail to see that the character and perfection of the Godhead are involved in that inerrancy? Some years ago a 'liberal' theologian, deprecating the discussion as not worth while, remarked that it was a matter of small consequence whether a pair of trousers were originally perfect if they were now rent. To which the valiant and witty David James Burrell replied that it might be a matter of small consequence to the wearer of the trousers, but the tailor who made them would prefer to have it understood that they did not leave his shop that way. . . . The Most High might at least be regarded as One who drops no stitches and sends out no imperfect work." (*The Fundamentals*, III, p. 11.)

autographs] were like when he read them." — That is a contemptible statement. The earlier copyists left a record.

4) Now for their real argument: the original manuscripts have disappeared, and since we have only copies of them, the value of the original is lost. — Do they really mean to say that? That would mean, of course, that, if God wanted us to have His real, authentic, authoritative Word, Paul would have had to write out a hundred million original manuscripts of his epistles, so that every Christian congregation could have them in Paul's handwriting or in the handwriting of his thousand amanuenses. Or, as the CONC. THEOL. MTHLY. article referred to above suggests, God would have had to engrave His sacred Word on gold plates, deposit them in a specified spot, entrust them, say, to the officials of the Congressional Library in Washington "to be inspected and copied by anybody that desired to do so." Copied? No; that would not do either. For where is the guaranty that he copied correctly? We cannot believe that the moderns seriously mean that a document loses its value when it is copied. The Church at Rome did not say that the only worth-while epistle they had was the Epistle to the Romans. They did not say that they did not have the Epistle to the Galatians because they had only a copy of it. They did not demand that the autographs circulate in all congregations of that day down to all congregations of the last days. How many of our moderns have laid their eyes on the manuscripts which contain the proclamations of the President or of the Leader of Germany? All they see is the printed copy. And they know exactly what these men said. Do our lawyers ask to have the original engrossed documents embodying the legislative acts of Congress in their hands before they make use of them? Have done with this talk about copies not being as good as the originals. The Bible did not lose its force, its authority, the divine power of its words, through its transmission to us by way of written or printed copies.

5) If the moderns should now say that they were not referring to the copies *as such*, but only to faulty copies, we shall tell them that in that case they should not have used such general terms. And since they have used general terms ("a non-existent original text"), we shall not go on till they have definitely conceded that a good copy is as good as the original. If that is conceded, we shall have no further trouble with them. We, too, concede the variant readings. We have conceded right along that in some instances the original text has not yet been established. But we do not concede that the faulty transcription or faulty translation of a few passages vitiates the entire transcription. Some few passages have become doubtful. That gives no man the right to

cast doubt on all the other passages whose reading is not in doubt. Reasonable men do not thus treat other, human documents. Have done with this vicious trifling! Since you have admitted that you are not arguing against the *copies as such*, accept the copies where there are no various readings as being just as good as the original, the words you read in the copies as having the same inerrancy and the same divine power as the words which were written by Paul's own pen. In the words of the *Watchman-Examiner*: "Certainly, it must always be remembered that, when we speak of the inspiration of the words of Scripture, we logically mean those words that were written by Paul, Moses, and others. To this it has been replied that the documents written by Paul and Moses have perished. Why contend for the inspiration of something we do not possess? Here it is well to remind the objector that the same question might also be asked of those who believe in any kind of Biblical inspiration. But there is an answer. Granted that the original documents are lost, the words of those documents are still with us through copies made before their loss. And in so far as we have these words, we have a verbally inspired Bible today. The whole science of textual criticism proceeds upon the assumption of an inspired original. And we cannot honor too highly that company of godly scholars who have labored to lead us back to this original." (See *Theol. Mthly.*, 1923, p. 363.)

Finally (6) the moderns ought to realize that in arguing against Verbal Inspiration on the basis of the alleged non-existence of the original they are cutting their own throats. They stand for, say, Partial Inspiration, the inspiration of the doctrinal contents of the Bible; they insist that these doctrines are true because the sections presenting them were written by inspiration. We ask them: What do you know of these doctrines? You do not have the original text! You cannot prove the *gratia universalis* with John 3:16 because the original which is supposed to have contained these words is no longer in existence. "Here it is well to remind the objector that the same question might also be asked of those who believe in any kind of Biblical inspiration."¹⁵⁴

Now let us take a last look at Abbott's "infallibilities" phalanx. It looks formidable. But the argument is based on a fallacy. The first statement: "In order that the Bible should be infallible, the

¹⁵⁴) Dr. Pieper: "Theodore Kaftan is so set on doing away with Verbal Inspiration that he asserts two things which cancel each other. On the one hand he asserts that, as all theologians know, 'there is no fixed, firm text,' 'since the number of variant readings is legion.' On the other hand, he (Kaftan) is sure that he can determine on the basis of Scripture what in Scripture is and what is not the objective Word of God. That this would be impossible on the supposition that 'there is no fixed, firm text' did not dawn on him." (*Op. cit.*, p. 366.)

original writers must have been infallibly informed as to the truth; they must have been able to express it infallibly," is a true statement. But the next statement: "After their death their manuscripts must have been infallibly copied" is not true. It employs the sophistical generalization discussed above. The mistakes which the copyists made render a few passages doubtful but do not make all the rest fallible. It is simply not true that a message, a teaching, a statement, of the Bible loses its infallibility, its power, its divine character, when a fallible human being copies it, transmits it, preaches it. Will the condemned criminal doubt the validity of the pardon because a lowly messenger, and not the governor himself, brings and reads to him the pardon? And if the messenger mispronounces a word or two, is the pardon invalidated? — Enough has been said on this matter above. We shall add only one more remark. It is conceivable that, when we offer our main proof to Abbott — Christ's promise that He would preserve His infallible Word to the Church — he might reply: How do you know that Christ spoke those words? The original writers may have set them down infallibly, but the faulty copies, etc., etc. Our final remark is this: We go our way rejoicing and thanking God for the precious boon of an infallible Bible; let the others, if they must, wallow in the bog of doubt and uncertainty, a bog of their own making.

The argument under consideration (No. 17) is born of desperation. The case of those who deny the verbal inspiration and reliability of the Bible must be desperate if they have to bring in the unrelated matter of faulty copies. And this desperate argument, if upheld, leads to despair. If there is no reliance on our Bible as we have it, we get religious nihilism. TH. ENGELDER

(To be continued)

Sermon Study on Heb. 1:1-6

Eisenach Epistle for Second Christmas Day

The Eisenach Epistle-lesson for the Second Christmas Day is taken from the first chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews. It comprises the prolog, vv. 1-4, and three of the Scripture-passages cited by the author in proof of his statement that Christ far excels the angels in glory and power. The prolog consists of one long complex sentence grouped around two statements, the first found in the principal complex clause, vv. 1, 2, "God hath spoken"; the second in the complex subordinate clause, v. 3, "Who sat down." Round about these two brief sentences the writer, in majestic language well suited to his sublime subject, brings out his theme, introducing

to his readers Jesus, the God Incarnate, our Teacher and High Priest, by whom in these last days God has spoken to us and who, having by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb. 1:1.

At sundry times. "This is only an approximation to the meaning of the expressive but quite inimitable adverb used in the original (literally, 'many-portion-wise')." *Bible Commentary.* In *divers manner*, in various forms. "Common to both expressions is the notion of changeful diversity; but the former marks the changeful diversity of the times in which, and the persons through whom, God revealed Himself; the latter, the changeful diversity of the divine revelations as regards contents and form." Luene-mann, in *Meyer's Commentary*. At sundry times, sometimes in rapid succession, sometimes centuries intervening, God spake, and spake by various persons. Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant, Jacob on his death-bed, young Samuel, stern Amos, cultured Isaiah, weeping Jeremiah, King David, captive Daniel, what an array of men differing as to age and temperament and culture! And just as varied were the contents and the form of these prophecies. As to the form, there were dreams, Gen. 15; 28:12 ff.; 1 Sam. 28:6; Dan. 1:17; 2:1 ff., 4; 5:7; visions, Is. 6:1 ff.; Ezek. 1:8; Zech. 1-6; symbolic acts, Jer. 13; 19; Ezek. 4; 5; Levitical ordinances, Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; types, Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:1 ff.; dark speeches, riddles, Ezek. 17:2; Ps. 49:5; clear, explicit language, Is. 7:14; 9:6, 7. As to contents, again how varied! Jacob speaks of the coming King, Gen. 49:10 ff.; Moses, of the Prophet, Deut. 18:15; David, of the Priest, Ps. 110:4; Isaiah, of the virgin birth and the vicarious suffering and death of the Servant of the Lord; Micah names the city of His birth; Malachi speaks of His forerunner. So gradually through the millenniums one detail after the other was added to the first Gospel spoken by God Himself in Paradise.

Many different prophets spake, mortal beings, sinful men; yet they did not speak their own views, they did not voice their own opinions, they did not proclaim their own theory of salvation, their own philosophy of life. The utterances of these men of old, of times lying in the dim past, were not the product of human reason and research. In them dwelt another, God Himself, and while the lips of the prophet formed the words, God spake in and by and through these men, using them as His instruments, taking into His employ the natural and acquired physical and mental and spiritual gifts with which He had endowed them. It was God Himself speaking through these prophets at sundry times in divers manners.

"God spake." The writer uses the aorist participle; a real aorist, denoting unbounded, undetermined, timeless action, compressing God's speaking through the millenniums into one act, leaving indefinite when and how often He spoke.

God spake *unto the fathers*; this is the honorable title of the ancestors of the Jews living at the time this letter was written. To them God spake by means of prophets. Little by little, by slow degrees, detail upon detail was added. Thousands of years passed before the fathers were told that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin at Bethlehem. Yet from the very beginning this multi-portioned prophecy was able to accomplish whereunto God had spoken it, the salvation of mankind. Eve exclaims joyfully, "I have a man, the Lord," Gen. 4:1; Lamech, Gen. 5:29; Jacob, Gen. 49:18; Job 19:25 ff.; Elihu, Job 33:23-30. And still it was prophesying in part and knowing in part; cp. 1 Cor. 13:9. How little did the fathers know compared with the knowledge of their children living in the time of fulfilment, when a Greater One than all the prophets became the mouthpiece of God, revealing to mankind the divine plan of salvation for the execution of which He Himself had come upon the earth.

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, v. 2. There can be no doubt as to the time when this speaking of God through His Son occurred. The writer clearly distinguishes it from that of the prophets through whom Christ spoke in the Old Testament, prior to His incarnation. And it is a speaking which occurred before Christ, having purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. The author is speaking of the incarnate Son, the God-man in His state of humiliation, when He, the humble Rabbi of Nazareth, began to preach throughout the land of Israel, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, Matt. 4:23. He who was sent as the Redeemer of the world was also to be the great Prophet and Revealer of God; cp. John 1:17; 3:11-13; 7:16,17; 8:28. It is of this preaching Christ, the incarnate Son, in His humiliation during His sojourn on earth that the writer predicates the statements vv. 2-4, as mysterious as they are marvelous.

God hath spoken by His Son; the pronoun is omitted in the original as well as the article: God spake by Son. This construction not only emphasizes that this Son has all the characteristic qualities of a son, that he is a son in fact and truth. It stresses at the same time the uniqueness of this Son. There is no other son like Him. The word is therefore practically used as a proper noun, a name properly, in its real sense belonging to Him. What a divine mystery is unfolded in this brief word, Son! Though God is ab-

solutely one, indivisible, yet He has a Son, a true Son, since God Himself, the absolute Truth, calls this relation a relation of father to son. On the other hand, being a relation within God, it surpasses in its closeness and intimacy and in its very nature the relation of father and son in mankind in such a manner as to be absolutely unique. There is no fatherhood and no sonship in all the history of mankind that can be regarded as an exact and full parallel of the relation existing between God the Father and God the Son. Human sonship implies the subordination of the son to the father; yet the Son of God is in no wise inferior to the Father, subordinate to Him, God in a secondary sense of the term. The very fact that the Son is the Son of God renders that supposition impossible and at once shows up its fallacy and folly. A son has the nature of his father; the son of a white man is a white man, etc.; the Son of God, being God's own Son, must have the nature of His Father, must be God, even as the Father who has born Him is God. Yet, while the son of a man is a second man, the Son of God is not a second God, but partakes of the nature of God, which is that of absolute unity, inseparable, indivisible. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is one Lord," Jehovah *Echad*, Deut. 6:4. And with this one and indivisible Father the Son is one Being, one Essence, the one and indivisible Jehovah. This is a mystery past human understanding, a mystery so deep that even the wisest of all men, Solomon, confessed himself to be more foolish than any man, because, after having wearied himself to the point of exhaustion with trying to solve this mystery, he could find no answer to his ever recurring question, "What is His name?" Prov. 30:1-6.

Both truths, that the Son of God is a son, and that He is the Son of God, in other words, the sonship and the deity of the Son, are unfolded briefly vv. 2-4, and in ever fuller manner as the author gradually establishes his proposition, the superiority of the New Testament Covenant over that of the Old Testament. We shall see that as we study vv. 2b-4.

Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things. A privilege of sons is the right of inheritance. "If children, then heirs," says Paul, Rom. 8:17. Being born of the Father from eternity, Ps. 2:7, the Son is by virtue of that eternal birth an Heir, a possessor of all His Father possesses. The writer, however, does not say that Christ is an Heir of all things. He purposely uses a different expression. God appointed Him Heir. Of course, he does not mean to infer that the Son, after all, is subordinate to His Father, no matter how highly exalted a person He may be; that He is an Heir by appointment only. The author, as we have seen, is speaking of the incarnate Son. From the moment that the Son of God received a human nature into union with His divine person, God

by virtue of this intimate union appointed, set, placed, established, this human nature to be Heir of all things which belonged to the Son of God from eternity. Cp. Matt. 11:27; 28:18; John 3:35; 13:3. We know that in His state of humiliation Christ did not make full use of His full possession of all things. According to His human nature, though appointed Heir of all things, He voluntarily abstained from the free and constant use of this privilege. He entered into full and uninterrupted use of this inheritance when according to His human nature God set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Eph. 1:20-23. But let us note that there is no room for any time when the Son was not an Heir of all things. A kenosis which robs the incarnate Son of God of His divine power and majesty is unscriptural and anti-Scriptural. He is an Heir while performing His office on earth, while speaking as the mouthpiece of God to His fellow-men, and an Heir of *all* things, πάντων, without limit and without restriction. Any limitation of the heritage given to the human nature of Christ is a violation of this word of God which establishes the incarnate Son of God, even during His life of poverty and suffering, the Heir of all things.

By whom also He made the worlds, the heavens and the earth and all the host of them, Gen. 2:1. God made the universe by His Son. Here the relation of the Son to the Father is described from another viewpoint, that of mediatorship. Father and Son are one, John 10:30, one in essence and therefore one in will. From eternity it was the will of the Father and of the Son that the Son was to be the person through whom God in the time to be created would reveal Himself in word and deed. When, therefore, in the beginning God created heaven and earth, He did so by, through, the Son. There the Son acted as the Mediator, through whom God spoke His creative words, through whom He revealed His creative power and majesty, John 1:1-3. And in "these latter days," in the days of His sojourn on earth, the Son did not cease to be the Creator. The incarnate Son remains what He was from the beginning of time, the Maker of heaven and earth. We do not mean to say that the human nature of Christ was active in creating the world. That came into existence only four thousand years later, Luke 1:26-38. But it is the incarnate Son who four thousand years before His incarnation had created the world according to His divine nature, which existed from eternity, Prov. 8:22-30; Ps. 102:26-28. Since in the Son of Mary dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Col. 2:9, the human nature of Jesus is the human nature of Him through whom, as God's Workmaster, the worlds were made. (Prov. 8:30, "as one brought up with Him"; literally, builder, architect.) As the Creator and Maker of all things was also from the beginning their Owner and Lord, so the incarnate Son was

the Owner and Lord of the universe even in His deepest humiliation, God Himself having appointed Him also according to His human nature the Heir of all that the Son of God had made.

Subordinationists urge the "by whom" in order to prove the correctness of their view. There is no reason to see in this phrase any subordination:

1. The agent, or mediator, need not be subordinate to him whose mediator he is. Two business partners may agree that the one may build a church, the other a hotel. Neither is subordinate to the other.

2. In v. 10 the creation is directly ascribed to the Son.

3. The Son is not a son by adoption or a God in lesser degree, but the Son is begotten from the Father in eternity, 1:5.

4. If "by" would imply subordination, then God would be subordinate to Himself, Rom. 11:36 — "Of Him and through [by] Him and to Him are all things"; cp. Heb. 2:10; 1 Cor. 1:9.

Who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, v. 3.

The author now makes it as clear as human language can make it that, being the Son of God, this Son by His unique sonship is, as the Nicene Creed confesses, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. We read: "Who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." *Ὁς* refers still to the incarnate Son, through whom the Father spake, v. 2. The predicate is *ἐκάθισεν*, the aorist describing a past act in its entirety as completed once for all. The subject, the incarnate Son, is more closely defined by three participial clauses, two employing the present participle, durative, denoting continuity of state, *ὄν*, and of action, *φέρον*, moreover connected by *τε*, which is not so much a conjunctive particle like *καί* as an adjunctive particle, adding something to what has been stated and marking it at the same time as having an inner connection with, a close relation to, what precedes. The third participial clause has no connective and is to be referred to the predicate rather than to the subject. The participle is that of the aorist, denoting a historical act which had taken place once for all when this letter was being written and preceded the sitting down, which was also a past action at the time of the writing. Having cleansed for Himself, having finished the work of cleansing the sins, He sat down. The connection indicates that, when He sat down, and during all the time required to finish His cleansing, He, the incarnate Son, was continually the brightness of God's glory, unceasingly the express image of God's being, and

always upholding all things by the word of His power. No room here for either subordination or kenosis. Cf. "Die moderne Kenose im Licht der Schrift," *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 34 (1888), pp. 204, 295, 329. This will become the more evident as we study these participial clauses in detail.

"Who, being the brightness of His glory." From the creation of this visible world, which is a miracle beyond the comprehension of the human mind, which proud reason will not believe although it refers to earthly things, John 3:12, the writer ascends at once to the highest heaven, speaks of matters truly heavenly, of the nature and essence of the invisible God, an unfathomable mystery, and speaks of these inscrutable things in the language of man utterly unable adequately to explain so exalted a subject. The language is clear, the subject remains a profound mystery. The relation of the Son to the Father is described by two phrases, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person. The glory of God is that He is the Lord, Jehovah, Is. 42:8, the absolute Being, undetermined and undeterminable by anything outside of Himself, He that is, that was, and that shall come, Rev. 1:3; that He is the Holy, Holy, Holy, Is. 6:3; cp. John 12:41; separate from all and transcending all created beings, particularly all sin and wrong-doing, which is absolutely inconsistent with His nature and impossible for Him. This glory, Ex. 33:18, is identified with Jehovah, Ex. 34:5, 6, 8. The fulness of the glory, the unveiled face of God, no man can see and live. As the glory of the sun will blind every one looking straight into it, so the glory of God is like a blinding, consuming fire, which would immediately destroy sinful man were God to reveal it to him in its fulness, Ex. 33:19, 20.

Of this glory the Son is the "Brightness." Interpreters disagree on the exact import of the Greek term; some translate "reflected light," others "the flashing forth of light from light itself." There is no need of taking the word in the sense of reflection, that which is flashed forth from a body independent and altogether different from the body sending forth the light; e. g., the moon, dark in itself, flashing forth the light of the sun as long as this light strikes the moon. Nothing in the text demands this sense. The entire context discounts it, for the author evidently does not mean to describe the Son of God as one who casts back, reflects, light only as long as God shines upon Him without having light within Himself. The Son is indeed "*Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit, Licht vom unerschöpfen Lichte*," the Morning dawn (cp. Luke 1:78; Mal. 4:2) of Eternity, Light of Inexhaustible Light; cp. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, No. 539. Luther: "He calls Him such a Brightness as proceeds from the glory of the Father; as the rising dawn of the sun, carrying with itself and in itself the entire sun;

being not a part of the glory but the whole glory of the whole sun, shining from the sun and remaining with the sun. Therefore here in one word the birth, the unity of natures, the distinction of persons, is taught. For Christ is continually being born eternally of the Father, always goes forth as the sun in the morning and not at noon or eve. Personally, He is not the Father, as the brightness is not the sun; and still is with the Father and in the Father, neither before nor after Him, but equally eternal with Him and in Him, as the brightness is at the same time with and in and on the sun. Christ is the emanating brightness of the glory of the Father; in other words, He is only-begotten God and not the begetting God, yet perfect and whole God, like and as the Father." St. L., XII:158 f. Read the whole masterly exposition, extending over several pages.

The Son is that because He is at the same time "the express Image of His person." The Greek word translated "person" denotes etymologically, like its Latin equivalent *substantia*, a setting or placing under; the thing placed under; that which stands under the outer form, hence the nature, essence, substantial quality of a person or thing. Bauer-Preuschen: "Essence, reality; often used in contrast to [mere] appearance. It therefore denotes that which makes a person what he really is." Used of God, as here, the term denotes His Godhead, His deity.

Of this nature and being of God's deity the Son is the "express Image." Thayer defines the Greek term, 1) The instrument used in engraving or carving; 2) the mark (figure or letters) stamped upon that instrument or wrought out on it; hence a mark or figure burned in or stamped on, an impression; the exact expression (the image) of any person or thing, . . . precise reproduction in every respect." By the impression of the die a dollar bill is made what it is, a dollar bill. The Son is the "impression" of God's essence, this impression making Him what He is, so that His being is God's being. Yet, since He is the Image of God's essence, this impression does not create two different beings, two separate Gods, of equal authority, or one subordinate to the other, as the dollar bill is different from the die which stamps it. God is essentially one and indivisible. "I am that I am," Ex. 3:15; and being the express Image of this God, the Son is together with the Father the one true God, as Christ says: "I and the Father are one," John 10:30; "Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee," one, John 17:21. Nor was Christ at any one time made what He was not before as a former plain piece of paper was made a dollar bill by the impress of the die. Let us not overlook the present participle, ὄν. The Son, as long as He is the Son (and He was that from eternity; cp. Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:5; John 1:1, 2), is One, "being constantly and unceasingly" the express Image of God's essence.

Once more let us call attention to the fact that the author speaks here of the incarnate Son, the God-man. While speaking on this earth, while purging our sins, while in His deepest humiliation, He is always One, "being the express Image of God's essence," as He Himself, on the very eve of His suffering and death, told Philip, John 14:9-11. Isaiah calls the Babe of Bethlehem the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, Is. 9:6; cp. also Acts 3:15; 1 Cor. 2:8.

"And upholding all things by the word of His power." The ancient Greeks invented a fabulous giant, Atlas, a demigod, who supported on his shoulders the pillars on which the sky rested. Here is a true human being, who actually is One carrying, bearing, all things, the all, nothing excluded, the universe, and carrying it, upholding it, preventing it from collapsing, not by working to the point of exhaustion, but without great effort, by the word of His power. That word spoken by the Son, "Let there be light," not only created light, but preserves it so long as it pleases Him to have light. That word which created sun and moon and stars and gave to each one its place in the galaxy of heaven and prescribed to each one its course, keeps them strictly within this course and gives them power to perform their service until He shall order otherwise. That Babe of Bethlehem bears on His shoulder the government, the rule of all things, just because He is the Brightness of God's glory and the express Image of God's essence. Therefore His word is a word of *power*, it is dynamic, a living, never-tiring power, Is. 40:28.

The author has still more to say of this Son. He adds another participle; and while the first two were present participles, describing the ceaselessness of the being and the action, he now adds an aorist participle, denoting action completed once for all, a historic fact that occurred in the past. "When He had by Himself purged our sins." In the Septuagint the Greek term for "purge" is used in a special sense of the purification of persons rendered Levitically unclean because of some disease or eating or touching something unclean, Lev. 11-15. This purification was effected in various ways, by sprinkling or washing or bathing, etc. The term is also used of an ethical, moral purification, of the cleansing from sins committed against the Moral Law. From all these failings and sins and trespasses the Israelite was to be cleansed by having an atonement, a reconciliation, made by the offering of a sacrifice typifying the sacrificial death of Christ.

Christ once for all accomplished a cleansing of the sins when on the cross He cried, "It is finished." Cf. Heb. 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:11-13. Note that "cleansing" has no article, while "sins" has. The absence of the article stresses the qualitative force of the noun; it is a cleansing that is indeed what this word implies,

a cleansing that actually purifies, washes us till not a spot remains, a cleansing that is the basis of a complete justification, a cleansing not only from the filth of the flesh or ceremonial uncleanness, but from "the sins." Thank God for this article, for it points to sins as a class, including everything that is sin. Christ did not only purge us from some sinful things, but from *the* sins, the missings of the mark, sins great or small, sins of omission and commission, sins forgotten and sins weighing heavily on the conscience; from the whole category of sins He has purged us, has made an effective cleansing "by Himself"; Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest, the Son of God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe, offers Himself, the Brightness of God's glory and the express Image of God's being, as a ransom for man, as an atonement for the sins of the world. A marvelous cleansing indeed.

Having accomplished this cleansing, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. The Greek term for majesty is used in such passages as Deut. 32:3; Ps. 150:2 ("greatness"); 2 Sam. 7:23 ("great things"), of God's sovereign power and majesty on which such passages as Ps. 93 and Is. 40:12-28 are the best commentaries. On sitting on the right hand of some one as denoting the place of honor compare such passages as 1 Kings 2:19; Ps. 45:9; 110:1; Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. Sitting at the right hand of Supreme Majesty, the incarnate Son now enjoys to the full and uses continually according to His human nature also that divine majesty and glory which was His according to His divine nature from eternity, John 17:5, and which was communicated to His human nature at the moment of His incarnation, John 17:24. He who had come to begin His work of providing a cleansing for the sins of mankind in the womb of a human mother grew up from feeble infancy to the strength of manhood, was made under the Law, was made sin, was made a curse, willingly humbled Himself unto the death of the cross, and after having made a cleansing of the sin, having finished His work, having satisfied the outraged justice of God, has now sat down at the right hand of God, on the seat of glory belonging to His divine nature by virtue of His deity and to His human nature because of its unity with the divine nature and because He as the representative of mankind had gloriously accomplished the mission whereto He was sent. That seat is His because of His person and because of His work.

Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they, v. 4. "Being made so much better." The Greek word is derived from a root meaning to bring to full strength, to perfect. In the Letter to the Hebrews it is used quite frequently in designation of the pre-eminence, the greater excellency, of Christ's person or work.

"Much better than the angels." Angels excel sinful mankind by their holiness and sinlessness, their ever ready willingness to do God's will, Ps. 103:20. Angels excelled in many respects even sinless Adam and Eve. Man's dwelling-place was the earth, the angels' abode was heaven, Matt. 18:10. Man, being material, is bound and limited in his actions by many physical laws which because of their spiritual nature do not affect the angels. Yet, though angels count among their number the highest forms of living beings, creatures that stand round about the throne of God, in closest proximity to God's seat of glory, Is. 6:2; Rev. 4:6-8, the Son is more excellent than they and more excellent not only according to His divine but also according to his human nature.

"*Being made* so much better," writes the author. Again the incarnate Christ is spoken of, the God-man, and here according to His human nature. His divine nature from eternity far excelled by its very essence that of the angels; but His human nature, that nature created out of the flesh and blood of Mary, that Son of David, was made more excellent than even the angels, and this in the same measure or degree in which He has inherited a more excellent name beyond them, above them. The author uses a different word here, one originally meaning different, i. e., of another kind; the comparative, more different or far different. Therefore His name is more excellent because it is of an altogether different and higher kind or nature. In this sense the Greek word is used in every instance where it occurs in the New Testament, Rom. 12:6; Heb. 8:6; 9:10. The difference between the name of angels and that of the Son is not one of degree only, of greater or less honor and dignity, it is different in *kind*. No angel ever was given that kind of name that was given to the God-man when He sat down on the right hand of God.

This name so altogether differing in kind from that of angels Christ has "obtained by inheritance." By virtue of the birth of His human nature as the human nature of the Son of God He inherited as His human birthright what was the right and dignity of the Son of God from eternity. The perfect tense denotes that this name, given to Him as an inheritance at the moment of His conception, was from that moment in His possession as His abiding heritage. Though at times it seemed as though He had lost every trace of this dignity and glory, still through all vicissitudes and sufferings, even in death and in the grave, this name, higher than that of the angels, remained His heritage according to His human nature, which had only temporarily renounced the full and constant use of this inheritance.

What was this name more excellent than that of angels? The apostle does not let us remain in ignorance. He quotes Scripture

to explain this term "name." From these passages we learn that the term in Scriptural usage does not designate a mere title or tag or label. According to Scripture the name of a person or thing is the person himself to whom the name is applied. If Scripture gives the name God, Son of God, Creator, etc., to any being, it means to say that that being is God, etc. This term "name" therefore includes also all the attributes, all the works, in fact, anything whereby the person or object may be known, whereby he reveals himself. This is the manner in which the term "name" is explained in the verses following. The term "name" includes *divine names*, v. 5: My Son, begotten; I am His Father, He is My Son; vv. 8, 9: God, v. 10: Lord, *Κύριος*, the LXX translation for Jehovah; cp. v. 12, "Thou art the same"; *divine honor*, v. 6: angels shall worship Him; v. 13: the sitting at the right hand of God; *divine works*, vv. 10, 11: the creation, preservation, and final destruction of the world; the ruling over all enemies; *divine attributes*, vv. 5, 12: eternity. All this is included in the term "name," which designates the nature, the essence, and being of the second person of the Trinity from eternity. And all this honor and glory, this Deity, was given to the human nature of the Son of God at its origin as an abiding heritage; cp. Col. 2:9.

From vv. 1—3 we have learned that the author's purpose in writing this noble passage was to set forth in language as clear as human language can be the divine mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, the personal union of the human and divine nature in Christ Jesus. To prove His point, He exalts the incarnate Son of God above the angels and from the Old Testament quotes three appropriate passages, the first of which speaks of His birth in eternity, the second of His incarnation, the third of His second advent at the end of time.

For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? V. 5. The first passage quoted by the author is found Ps. 2:7. It has become quite customary to interpret this psalm as referring primarily to David and only typically to Christ and v. 7 as designating "the begetting into a royal existence, which takes place in and by the act of anointing." Delitzsch. This interpretation is a violation of sound hermeneutics; it is charging the New Testament writers and the Holy Ghost, who spoke through them, with not knowing what they are saying. There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit Himself clearly refers the entire psalm to Christ directly. Read Acts 4:25-28, where in v. 26 the Lord's Christ of Ps. 2:2 is identified with "Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed." In Acts 13:33 and Heb. 5:5 the words of Ps. 2:7 are said to have been

spoken directly to Christ. And the entire context of our passage leaves no doubt that the author was thinking of these words as being directed to Christ exclusively. The author means to prove that the name given to Jesus is more excellent than that given to the angels. Would Ps. 2:7 prove the greater excellency of Jesus' name if that decree had been addressed to David? Certainly not.

Again, the writer denies that a statement like that of Ps. 2:7 was at any time addressed to an angel, while as a matter of fact angels are called "sons of God" in Holy Scripture, Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7. Hence the author, the Holy Spirit who spoke by the writer, could not have had in mind a sonship such as He actually had attributed to angels, a sonship by creation or by adoption or by installation into some office. He had in mind a sonship far exceeding that of any man and of any angel, a sonship altogether unique, an actual being born of the Father, a sonship involving perfect unity of essence and nature with the Father, v. 3 a. It is not the Creator God, the Triune God, who calls Himself here a father, but the first person in the Trinity, who is the Father of the second person. It is not the God of grace who is willing to accept David as His son and establish him as His theocratic king, His representative on earth, and in this sense as His son. This interpretation adds something essential that is not stated by the verb "beget" nor even implied in it. "Beget" throughout the Old and the New Testament invariably means to beget into sonship, never into kingship or into a kingdom. The begetting of Ps. 2:7 is that mystery great beyond controversy and comprehension connected with the distinction of the persons in the Trinity, that the Son is begotten, or born, from the Father in eternity.

"This day." Since the Son is the exact Image of the essence of God, who is the one eternal God, Ps. 90:1, this Son must be like the Father, without beginning. Cp. Heb. 1:10-12. His begetting, therefore, cannot have taken place in time, on any particular "day" in the history of the world. It must be an act taking place in eternity, an eternal act of the everlasting God on account of which the Son is by His very nature the Brightness of God's glory, the express Image of His being.

The second passage is taken from 2 Sam. 7:14, part of the prophecy in which David was told that the promised Messiah was to be a descendant of the house of David. "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son." Speaking through the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews, the Holy Spirit assures us that this prophecy given to David referred directly to one greater than Solomon, to great David's greater Son, who was at the same

time David's Lord and God, yet truly according to His human nature David's Seed. It is to this offspring of the house of David that God said: "I will be to Him a Father," etc. Why? Because that Son born of Mary, a virgin of the lineage of David, was the Son of the Most High, God Incarnate, and because that human nature conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit was received from the very moment of its conception into personal union by the Son of God, so that God became the Father of this God-man according to His human nature not only by creation nor by adoption nor only by regarding it as an object of fatherly love and care and protection, but in a unique sense the Father of that human nature which was from its very existence intimately, personally, united with the Son of God.

And again, when He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him, v. 6. Literally translated: And when again He shall lead the First-born into the inhabited world, He says, And all angels of God shall worship Him. When the Father sent His Son into the world the first time, He came in utmost lowliness. In quiet little Bethlehem He was born, a helpless infant, of a humble virgin, an unknown, poor stranger, whom nobody welcomed. At His second advent God Himself will lead Him. The word used always implies the actual presence of the leader. Again Christ will come to the inhabited world, to that vast teeming mass of human beings whom He has redeemed. This time there will be no possibility of mistaking His true nature. God Himself shall lead His Son, the God-man, and then shall all the tribes of the earth see the Son of Man, who is the Son of God, coming in the heavens with power and great glory, Matt. 24:30. With Him shall come all the heavenly host, the innumerable company of angels. And then the command of God shall be fulfilled, "All the angels of God shall worship Him." Not as though that was to be the first time such homage should be given Him by these exalted spirits. They worshiped Him already at the creation of the world, Job 38:7; John saw the ten thousands times ten thousands worship the Lamb upon the throne, Rev. 5:8-14. But oh, how will the heavens and the earth resound with the jubilant adoration, the worshipful praise, of all the host of heaven, when at last shall be fulfilled the word spoken to friends and foes, Luke 22:27, 28; Rev. 22:20; Matt. 26:64; when the Son of God will come to judge the earth, to lead His own in triumph into the Father's home above, John 17:24! That other-worldly glory flashing forth from, and surrounding, Jesus, the Brightness of God's glory and the express Image of God's essence, will be the source of inexpressible joy to His believing followers, will overwhelm even His enemies, so that they will have to confess

that Jesus is indeed the Lord, Phil. 2:9-11. So will the virgin-born Infant be led back into the world whose sin He purged away, where but a few acknowledged Him as their God and Savior, John 1:9-13.

This text is admirably suited for the Christmas season. It throws a brilliant light into the darkness of the lowly stable at Bethlehem. It brings out the hidden glory of that humble Child in the manger. That is a lesson of special importance in our day of so general denial of the deity of our Redeemer. The preacher will urge his audience to profess boldly the deity of the Christ-child. That alone gives us the assurance that His Word is truth, that our sins are purged, that He will safely lead us to glory, protecting both soul and body which He has created. The preacher may point out: *Our Precious Christmas-gift as to His Person and His Work.* Or he may show that Mary's Son is *God's own Son*, as proved by His names, His works, His honor and glory. — *Behold in the Manger Your Heavenly King!* The King of the universe (things visible, vv. 2 b, 3 a; things invisible, vv. 4-6); the King of Grace, vv. 1, 2 a, 3 b; the King of Glory, v. 6. — *Unto Us a Child is Given!* The Mighty God; the Everlasting Father (Creator and Preserver); the Prince of Peace. (Purges our sin, rules His Church, leads it to glory.) — *The Miracle of Christmas.* The Son of God becomes the Purger of our sin; the Creator and Preserver becomes our Brother; the Heir of all things makes us heirs of heaven.

THEO. LAETSCH

Outlines on the Wuerttemberg Epistle Selections

First Sunday in Advent

Rom. 14:17-19

(NOTE.—In order to understand this text, the preacher must read the entire chapter. Paul is speaking of such as refrain from eating and drinking certain things, v. 2, and as observe certain days, v. 5, of whom he says that they are "weak in the faith." He does not indicate that he has the same kind of people in mind of whom he speaks in 1 Cor. 8. Among the Christians at Rome there were such as thought they could serve the Lord best by setting aside now and then a special day to Him and by abstaining from certain food and drink. They did not do this in a self-righteous spirit. Yet they were in danger of looking upon others who did not do likewise as not being as sincere and zealous in their Christianity as they were. Their hesitancy to "esteem every day alike," v. 5, and to "eat all things," v. 2, was a weakness on their part. Over against these the apostle says: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," v. 17. — For a detailed exposition see Stoeckhardt, *Roemerbrief*.)

The very fact that we are permitted on this First Sunday in Advent, being the first Sunday of a new church-year, to assemble in the house of the Lord in order to hear the Word of God, the Gospel of our salvation, and to worship the Lord by hearing and believing His Word, by saying our prayers, and by singing our hymns of supplication, praise, and thanksgiving, is evidence that the Lord will continue unto us His kingdom and its blessings. While Christ has procured these blessings for all men, only those enjoy them who are members of the kingdom of God. Of this kingdom of God our text speaks. It answers the question,

What Must We Know Concerning the Kingdom of God that We may Enjoy Its Blessings and Impart Them to Others?

We must know

1. *What the true nature of the kingdom of God is*
2. *What the true service is that is required in the kingdom of God*

1

a) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." In these words the apostle tells what the kingdom of God is not. Its essential characteristics is not found in mere *external* things. That Christians in the congregation at Rome set aside certain days dedicated to the Lord, and that they refrained from certain food and drink in order to exercise a rigorous discipline of self, practice self-denial, and avoid the dangers of excesses in eating and drinking, all this could not *in itself* assure their membership in the kingdom of God. After all, these things were within the sphere of *adiaphora*, things in themselves neither right nor wrong. To think that the mere observance of such things are indicative of real piety is a mistaken idea. If people, for instance, fast before partaking of the Lord's Supper or bow their head every time the name of Jesus is mentioned or restrict their diet during the season of Lent or refrain from eating meat on Good Friday: all this may be done if done in the right spirit; but *in itself* it does not constitute real piety or make such as observe such practices better Christians for this reason than others who do not observe them. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." What is it?

b) "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." These are not virtues but graces, divine gifts. "Righteousness," that which Christ has acquired for us, 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:18; Phil. 3:9. The result of such righteousness is "peace," Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:2; Luke 2:14; Num. 6:26. And the result of both such righteousness and peace is "joy in the Holy Ghost," that joy which the Holy Ghost gives to the believer, Rom. 15:13; 1 John 1:3, 4; John 15:11. The sinner who has come to

a knowledge of his sins, repents of them, by faith accepts Christ's righteousness, the forgiveness of sin; he it is that also has peace with God and the joy of being an heir of salvation; he it is that is thus a member of the kingdom of God. Being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, comforted by the peace of God, and rejoicing in the joy of the Spirit of God, a believer is assured his membership in God's kingdom and his eternal salvation. The kingdom of God is of an *internal* and *spiritual* character. "The kingdom of God is within you," Luke 17:21.

Application.— We should beware of making our Christianity consist merely of external things, external observances, etc. We should make sure that by faith we have laid hold of Christ's righteousness. Then we have and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God. But then will follow also a true service in this kingdom.

2

a) That is true service in the Kingdom of God which serves Christ, v. 18. Such service is the *result* of having righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, these spiritual and internal blessings which are characteristic of the kingdom of God. He who through Christ is justified before God, who through Christ has peace with God, and who rejoices in the Holy Ghost because of his salvation in Christ, will serve Christ cheerfully with body and soul. Such service consists in a truly godly life, in doing good works, in having and manifesting Christian virtues. Such a one is "acceptable to God" and "approved of men," v. 18. Even men must respect such a godly life; by well-doing, Christians "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," 1 Pet. 2:15, and prevent them from blaspheming, 2 Sam. 12:14.

b) That is true service in the kingdom of God which builds up, and does not destroy, the kingdom of God, v. 19. Since we have peace with God through Christ, we should also live in peace among ourselves. We should therefore not let trivial, non-essential matters, such as food, drink, keeping of days (according to context), or anything along similar lines, cause a disturbance in the Church. The strong should bear with the weak; "for meat destroy not the work of God," v. 20; "destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died," v. 15. The strong in the faith should bear with the weak; but the weak should not judge the strong, v. 3.

Application.— We should serve Christ by a truly Christian life; we should not unnecessarily, on account of trivial matters, things in themselves neither right nor wrong, disturb the peace of the Church but rather "follow after the things *wherewith one may edify another*," v. 19, for the upbuilding of God's kingdom and to the glory of His name.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Second Sunday in Advent**Rom. 14:7-12**

The Christian church-year is not a haphazard arrangement of festival seasons; it is designed 1) to teach Bible history in its appropriate chronology; 2) to give instruction to Christians for every period and phase of their lives. — An indication in the very first two texts of the old Gospel series: I. Advent, the central fact of Christian faith: The Coming of the King into the World — Our Redemption; but at once, II. Advent, the Church bids us look to the end, the consummation: The Second Coming of the King, for Judgment.

This text is appropriate for this Sunday; it speaks to us of our confidence and our resolve in view of the Lord's coming, whether in death or at the Last Judgment. Says the prophet (Mal. 3:2):

"Who may Abide the Day of His Coming?"

1. *Our confidence*
2. *Our resolve in view of the Lord's coming*

1

This life has many troubles and worries, not the least of which is the uncertain future — and the one certain thing in this uncertain future: death and the Judgment. It is not surprising that many lose courage — rather, surprising that any have the courage to live on — except the Christian.

"We are the Lord's," v. 8. Not by nature, Eph. 2:3. Nor could we transport ourselves from the Kingdom of Darkness to that of the Son of God. — But v. 9. Christ died for our sins and broke the power of Satan; He rose in proof of His victory; He lives eternally, the Lord Omnipotent, and rules the universe. He has sought and found us who were lost and made us His own by regeneration.

We are the Lord's whether we live or die. While we live, we are in His hand; He leads and guides us, controls all that happens to us; there are no accidents; we go the way He has mapped out for us; why worry? — He has set the goal; our life will end exactly at the right time; He calls us when our work is done, when our mansion in the Father's house is ready for us and we are ready for it. And the judgment for us is already past because we are the Lord's.

2

But Matt. 24:42—51. Make sure that we are the Lord's until He comes.

Hence let us live unto the Lord. Not to ourselves, seeking honor, glory, earthly treasures and pleasures; but to the Lord, who

has bought us; serve Him, not by leaving the world, but by so living in the world that the world by our service may also become His own; ever conscious that for this very purpose He has left us in the world.

Let us prepare that we may die to the Lord. See that we grow in the knowledge of Him who is our only Righteousness; use this new year of grace for this purpose; hear and read His Word; become more diligent and fervent in prayer; be ready at any moment, wherever we may be, to welcome Him when He comes. So shall we be ready to give account of ourselves to God.

THEO. HOYER

Third Sunday in Advent

Acts 3:19-26

For several reasons this is a splendid Advent text. For one thing, it draws our attention to the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, showing how the children of God in the days of the Old Covenant were informed of the coming of the divine Helper and could look forward to His arrival. Moses, Samuel, and Abraham are the great men of God mentioned here by name; but St. Peter, the speaker, tells his audience that *all* the prophets "have likewise foretold of these days." It was a season of waiting, on which we like to dwell during the days before Christmas, when we ourselves are waiting for this blessed festival to arrive.

The text is a real Advent message likewise because it directs our thoughts to the second coming of Christ, His coming on the Day of Judgment. How much the ancient Church during the Advent season occupied its thoughts with this subject can be seen from the regular lessons of the church-year selected for this period.

Let us today, on the basis of this text, speak of the

and note **Second Coming of Our Lord Jesus**

1. *That this coming is proclaimed both in the Old and in the New Testament*
2. *That it will be a blessed coming for believers, inaugurating times of refreshing*
3. *That we must prepare for it by true repentance and conversion*

1

That Jesus will come again and at that time inaugurate an eternity of bliss for His disciples is vehemently denied by unbelievers and scoffers. Their manner of attacking this doctrine is vividly described 2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

Against all unbelief we put the plain message of the Scriptures. Peter asserts that the prophets of God since the world began have spoken of this very thing. Among the passages of the Old Testament Scriptures which treat of this matter and which at once come to mind is Joel 2:31 ("the great and terrible Day of the Lord"); cf. also Is. 26:19-21. Of the many pertinent New Testament passages we merely mention the great description of the Last Judgment, Matt. 25:31 ff. Let the unbelievers mock. Some day it will become apparent how woefully they have deceived themselves.

It is true, of course, that Jesus at present is invisible. Peter speaks of this fact, v. 21, telling us that Christ at present is dwelling in the invisible world. Christ indeed is not shut up in heaven; He is everywhere; but our eyes at present do not see Him. On that Great Day all eyes will behold Him.

2

Peter is telling his hearers in the Temple of Jerusalem about the return of Christ in terms of rejoicing. The times when He will appear he calls "the times of refreshing," v. 19.

Here on earth God's children often mourn and are distressed. Cf. Matt. 5:4; Acts 14:22. "They sow in tears," Ps. 126:5. The situation will change for them when Christ reappears. "They shall reap in joy." They shall be refreshed. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," etc., Rev. 21:4.

Furthermore, Peter in v. 21 speaks of "the restitution of all things." He evidently does not mean that all the wicked and condemned people will be released from their place of punishment and placed into a condition of bliss and joy. Such a view would contradict clear statements of the Holy Scriptures. Cf. Matt. 25:46. What he means to say is that the old heaven and the old earth will vanish and there will come to be "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," 2 Pet. 3:13. There will be once more a situation in which God's children will be perfectly holy, serving Him in celestial happiness from eternity to eternity. What a day to look forward to, this day of refreshing! How we should thank God for this message!

3

The great question is how we may properly prepare for this second coming of Christ. Peter says, "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out," v. 19.

There have been enthusiasts who, thinking that the return of the Lord was imminent, prepared outwardly, dressed in white garments, and assembled at specially designated localities, on mountain tops or other elevated places. Views of this sort always became manifest as sad delusions.

The right preparation for this coming of the Last Day consists in something inward, in repentance and conversion. In the first place, he that wishes to be in the right attitude when Christ appears must realize his sinfulness and feel sorry for the wrongs that he has done. True contrition is one of the things needed if we are to meet Christ in the proper way. Such contrition is here referred to in the call: Repent. In the second place, what is needed is the acceptance of Christ as the only Savior. Having realized our own unworthiness and inability to provide help for ourselves, we must gratefully seize the aid, the forgiveness, which Jesus offers us. This is referred to in our text in the term "be converted."

Outwardly God's children may appear to be not better prepared for the reception of the great King than the children of the world. But their inward condition is that which Peter here describes: putting their trust in the redemptive work of Christ, their hands are, as it were, always stretched out, eager to welcome Him as He arrives to take them home. — The great question for every one of us today is, Are we in this frame of mind and heart? Is Christ to us the Rock of salvation? Or are the flesh-pots of Egypt enticing us to such an extent that we neglect Jesus and His promises?

W. ARNDT

Fourth Sunday in Advent

1 John 1:1-4

This Sunday is the last of a series preparing for the Christmas Festival. Have we prepared? For the Christian Church, Christmas is the time to tell of the coming into the world of Christ, our Savior. Does that take preparation? Can we not simply tell the story? God's Word bids us prepare more carefully. It describes for us the determination and the conviction which are essential for a blessed telling of the Christmas Gospel and bids us strive for this conviction. It sets before us blessed purposes which we are to realize in telling the story to our world. Let the Apostle John, then, answer our closing Advent question for us today

Why Shall We Tell of Christ, Our Savior?

His answer in our text, and that of Scripture as a whole, is twofold:

1. *Because we know Him so surely*
2. *Because we thereby achieve such great results*

1

St. John may not have written this epistle just before Christmas; but he says that he has a Christmas purpose in it: to declare Christ. He is moved to this by a mighty knowledge, a conviction of which he is powerfully sure. That assurance is every Christian's.

A) What is it that we are sure of in Christ Jesus? 1) He was "with the Father," "His Son." To tell of human beings stirs us mightily at times; how much more to tell of God! The note of wonder, of exultation, in the message of Jesus, Is. 9:6; John 3:13; 1:14. 2) He is "the Word of Life." The same name of Christ in John 1. A word is the means by which a thought or fact is revealed and conveyed to another. Christ is the Word of Life; He is the means by which God's own way of salvation for man, God's own will of love and grace, is conveyed to man. Beholding Christ, we know God, John 1:18; 5:36; 6:46. 3) He is "eternal Life." This text unique in calling Christ directly "Life." Man by nature is cut off from God and therefore without life, Eph. 2:12. But Christ means life to us; He has reconciled us again to the Father, John 1:12, has brought God's grace to man, John 1:17; 1 John 3:14; Col. 3:3. This Christ accomplished by accepting human nature, taking man's burden of sin on Himself, suffering and dying as man's Substitute. What a story! How different from every other!

B) But are we truly sure of these facts about Christ? 1) St. John and his fellow-disciples were sure. The Life was "manifested," visible to human eyes; "we have seen with our eyes, have looked upon, and our hands have handled." Cf. John 1:14; Luke 24:39. St. John and the disciples spoke with the certainty of eye-witnesses concerning His life, death, resurrection, 1 Cor. 15. 2) We Christians today are likewise sure. We may not be eye-witnesses, but our faith is just as sure and even more blessed, John 20:29. Through the Word of Grace the Christian today stands in just as rock-ribbed a certainty of Christ as did the eye-witnesses, 2 Pet. 1:15-21. Shall we, then, not speak?

2

The Christian bears witness to Christ; he tells the Christmas-story because he knows His Savior and is sure of Him in faith. But there is not merely a pressure from within, behind the telling; there is also a goal and a purpose for the telling.

A) We produce a divine fellowship. 1) Our telling of the story of the Savior is to produce a "fellowship which is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Our story is the means of bringing men who had been cast off from God into a saving oneness with Him again, Matt. 28:19; John 17:20, 21. 2) Our telling of the story is to produce a fellowship between men — "that ye also may have fellowship with us." The closeness of this fellowship is made apparent through the entire remainder of the epistle; it is apparent in the lives of Christians through their keeping of the "new commandment," 2:8; 4:21. Yes, is this not the one story that can produce true love between men in this hate-ridden and in any age?

B) We produce joy. 1) Men hope to get joy out of Christmas. This year they are well in advance sure of the shortcomings of much Christmas joy — loneliness, insecurity, perplexity, temper the holiday mood. But Christians plan to produce genuine joy, genuine by every test. 2) We bring joy in Christ Jesus, we speak "that your joy may be full." No reservations, exceptions, are to mar this joy; the Savior's own program, John 15:11, of making men happy is ours in telling men of the Christmas Gospel.

May the Church go to work with a will, with zest, with purpose, in carrying out its Christmas task of telling the Savior's story!

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

Christmas Day

Eph. 1:3-8

We Christians may rejoice today when Christ was born to comfort and to save us. In that Child lying in the manger the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, Col. 2:9. By this Child came grace and truth, John 1:17. And of His fulness, inexhaustible because it is the fulness of the Godhead, have all we received, and grace for grace. That is the wonderful Christmas-gift of God, an everlasting gift, providing for all who accept it joy and comfort in time and unending bliss in eternity. This gift was not given on the spur of the moment. As loving parents plan and prepare their gifts for days and weeks before Christmas, so the heavenly Father planned and prepared His gift in the ages before the world began. It is this latter thought that is stressed in our lesson and that adds to the value of the gift and ought to increase our Christmas joy.

Thanks Be to God for His Everlasting Grace in Christ Jesus!

1. *Here is predestination unto the adoption of children*
2. *Here is wisdom and prudence for preordained holiness*

1

We thank God, who has predestinated us unto the adoption of children. On the basis of Rom. 8:14-17; 1 John 3:1,2, etc., describe the marvelous privilege of being adopted as God's children. How is such adoption possible in view of Eph. 2:3? Answer: By Jesus Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem. There in the manger lies the Child of God, the Beloved, v. 6; cp. Is. 42:1; Matt. 3:17; 17:5. In Him we have been accepted as God's children. We again ask, How is that possible? The apostle answers: Because in this Child we have forgiveness of sins, remission of our transgressions, a sending away of all our wrong-doings; cp. Micah 7:18, 19; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12.

Once more we ask, How could God send away sin? Does His justice not require punishment? Surely. But there in the manger lies the Child in whom we have redemption by His blood, a deliverance not only from the penalty but just as surely from the guilt of sin. It is a ransom by the blood of Him of whom in a peculiar sense God is the Father, who is our Lord, v. 3; 1 John 1:7, a ransom by which the last penny of our guilt has been paid, a redemption whereby we have been freed forever from the wrath of God, a ransom which opens to us the door to heavenly places, v. 3, closed to us by our sins.

What moved God to give us so marvelous a gift? Was there perhaps something of merit that God saw in us? Listen to what the apostle says vv. 5, 6; and lest we forget, once more the riches of His grace are mentioned in v. 7. This grace goes back into eternity. According to the good pleasure of His will He has predestinated us unto the adoption of children before the foundation of the world, v. 4. Already in eternity God thought of you and of me and decided to make you and me His children. For this purpose He sent His Christmas-gift, Christ Jesus, vv. 3, 5, whose birthday we are celebrating today. That Child is Jesus, the Savior, Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:21, Christ the Lord, Luke 2:11. What a marvelous Christmas-gift both as to its nature and because of its Donor, who so graciously thought of you and me ages before we ever saw the light of day, ages before the world began. Do we appreciate this gift properly?

2

V. 4. As children of God we are to walk in holiness of life, 1 Pet. 1:14, 15. For this purpose He has chosen us from eternity. Knowing that mankind would fall and utterly corrupt itself, He had determined to have a people denying ungodliness, and zealous of good works, Titus 2:12, 14; Phil. 2:15. Our sanctification is the unalterable will of God, expressed not only in His constantly repeated demand of holiness, but already by the fact that He from eternity chose you and me that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, love towards our heavenly Father, love towards all mankind. For this purpose He redeemed us, not only from the guilt and penalty of sin but also from its power, v. 7. For this purpose He made us His children, v. 5. Children love their parents, and so He has given us the spirit of adoption lovingly and joyfully to do His will. Cp. Rom. 6:3-23.

In order to accomplish this purpose and enable us to be blameless in keeping with this eternal will and good pleasure, He has caused His grace to abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence, v. 8. By the Child in the manger we have not only the strength to

walk in newness of life, but also the necessary wisdom and intelligence without which we would not be able to know and do the will of God. Cp. Eph. 5:15; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-11; Luke 1:17.

All this we owe to the grace of God in the Christ-child, to its abundance. To clean a filthy rag, an abundance of water and soap is needed. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Is. 64:6. Cp. Jer. 2:22. If it takes an abundance of grace to make our pitifully few righteousnesses acceptable to God, what a superabundance of divine grace and loving patience and long-suffering is required to rid our heart of the abomination of unrighteousnesses which constantly arise out of it! Mark 7:20-23; Rom. 7:18. We need this grace every minute! And God offers it to us; from eternity He had determined to give it to us in divine superabundance in His gift of grace, the Manger Infant. And wherever we fail in our efforts, in Christ we have forgiveness of sins, by the riches of God's grace. What a precious Christmas-gift! Take it! Rejoice in it! Use it!

THEO. LAETSCH

Second Christmas Day

Heb. 12:1-4

Again we have heard the glorious, joyous tidings of a Savior from sin and its curse. Again the multitude of the heavenly host has proclaimed to us, "Unto you is born a Savior," etc.

Is this message proclaimed simply to provide a holiday and a celebration for us and our children? Certainly not. The Gospel which was appointed by the early Church for the Second Christmas Day shows us the purpose of the Christmas-message. There we read that the shepherds, having worshiped the Lord Jesus, *returned to their daily work and cheerfully took up their daily humble duties*. That course is exactly the one which the present text also impresses upon us. Therefore,

"Let Us Run with Patience the Race that is Set before Us"

1

The cloud of witnesses who testify to the truth of our faith should encourage us to this patient running of the race.

a) Our Christian life here upon this earth is compared to a race, 1 Cor. 9:24-26. That is to impress upon us the fact that it is not enough to begin to be a Christian, but that the Christian is to continue even unto death, Rev. 2:10b. "One receiveth the prize." The Christian who begins to follow Jesus soon finds all manner of obstacles, difficulties, temptations, pitfalls. The life of a Christian is not a series of celebrations. Our text mentions

"weights," i. e., discouraging experiences, which would weary us. Many, very many, have allowed such discouraging experiences (e. g., hypocrites in the church, ingratitude, misunderstanding, etc.) to chill their ardor and cause them to fail in the race or to drop out of the ranks. Let us be sure to put away from ourselves that can make us unwilling to continue to run steadfastly the race that is set before us, to walk, step by step, the narrow way.

Away, vain, idle thoughts, depart;
Roam not, my soul, abroad.

We should look to the many (chap. 11) who have gone before and who in speech and life bear witness to the truth of God's Word.

b) Then there is the "sin which doth so easily beset us." That also must be laid aside. While one becomes weary or discouraged in running, another is allured by some forbidden fruit which Satan or the world offers. Our flesh and blood is so easily interested in this satanic bait of temporal gain or pleasure. Sin "doth so easily beset us." Oh, the temptations are so many! At every turn there is some pitfall of sin. But tell me, we who are standing at the manger of the pure Child Jesus and rejoice in His love and kindness, shall we now turn from Him to wallow again in the mire and filth of sin and carnal indulgence? No, when sin besets us, let us look at the cloud of witnesses that surround us. *Abraham* forsook home, fatherland, and relatives to avoid idolatry. *Abraham* lived in peace with selfish *Lot* and did not allow *Lot's* worldly selfishness to weary him or to drive him to the same sins. How much ridicule did *Noah* endure! How was *Joseph* tempted! In what bright colors the pleasures of Egypt were offered to *Moses*! These all remained steadfast; they fought manfully against sin. Upon this day the ancient Church also commemorated the martyr *Stephen*. His life and death are also to encourage us to run, etc.* Let us do likewise!

Again and again turning from the beggarly elements of this world, from its bait of pleasure, let us remain faithful unto death. Let us remain in the ranks of those many witnesses of whom we read chap. 11:33 ff. For this purpose let us often read the lives of the great and faithful children of God as recorded in Holy Scripture. Their lives have been recorded to encourage us. God has surrounded us with this cloud of witnesses so as to help us that we may not become weary, that we may not be seduced by the deceitful promises of Satan and the world.

* If *St. Stephen* is to receive special attention, the narrative which deals with his testimony and martyrdom may be more fully exploited at this place.

2

"But if too hot you find the fray," look to *Jesus*, v. 2, the Author and Finisher of our faith. How much He met which could have wearied Him! In youth there was poverty, and misunderstanding even by His mother and His foster-father. And later on there was the bitter enmity of His own people. The leaders of the people persecuted Him, His own disciples misunderstood Him, denied Him, and betrayed Him, v. 3. How much shame, suffering, misery, ingratitude, misunderstanding! Luke 19:41. But all this is now past, and Jesus is exalted at the right hand of God. Even now He is praised, glorified by His Christians, and the day will come when every knee must bow before Him, etc., Phil. 2:10, 11. Just so it is His intention that those who suffer with Him here shall reign with Him, 2 Tim. 2:12a. Those who are humiliated with Him here shall be glorified, 1 Pet. 4:13. Let us look to this Jesus lest we become weary or lest sin drive the Holy Spirit from our hearts. Remember and behold again and again the humble birth of Jesus — in a stable! And yet He is to have a name above every name. We are not to be above our Master. If we would be His disciples, we must take up our cross and follow Him. But remember Rom. 8:18. Hymn 334, 1.

3

Our text adds one final warning: *Do not exaggerate your sacrifices, difficulties, or cross-bearing.* a) "You have not resisted unto blood striving against sin." God has not permitted temptation to become too severe, but He has with the temptation made a way to escape, so that you have been able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10:13. We Christians are inclined to exaggerate our self-denials and difficulties, to bemoan our afflictions or temptations. That is what the ungrateful Israelites did, Ex. 14:11; 17:1-3; Num. 20:2-5; 21:5.

b) When these thoughts of self-pity attack us, we should think upon that cloud of witnesses who suffered so much for Jesus, and we should look to Jesus. (Second Art.) Think what the glorious Christmas-message has taught us. Dwell in thought upon God's promises. What joy is awaiting us! Vv. 2, 3.

MARTIN S. SOMMER

Sunday after Christmas

1 Tim. 3:16

With the question Matt. 22:42 Jesus put the issue of His incarnation squarely before His adversaries. It was a basic matter upon which they were to reach a decision. The answer determined whether they were with Him or against Him. The Incarnation is

a central doctrine of the Christian Church. It is necessary that we know what we must believe concerning it if we wish to be Christians. Let us therefore dwell on the topic

The Christian's Confession Concerning the Incarnation of Christ

1. *He humbly confesses that it is a great mystery*
2. *He sees in it the source of all true godliness*

1

The sole authoritative source of all our knowledge of the Incarnation is the Bible. Our text: "God . . . in the flesh." To the apostle's witness must be added that of others. God the Father declares of the Man Jesus in the Jordan: Matt. 3:17. Jesus says of Himself: John 10:30; 14:9; 17:1, 5, etc. The Holy Spirit testifies: Rom. 1:4. The prophets of old predicted the Messiah's divine nature in Is. 9:6; Micah 5:2, and are in harmony with the declarations of the apostles, who saw Jesus in the flesh, John 1:1-3, 14; 1:49; 20:28; 6:69; Matt. 16:16. Angels join in, Luke 1:32; 2:11, 14. Others testify: John 9:35, 38; Matt. 27:54. Even the devils declare Luke 4:41. Jesus is true God.

But Jesus is also true man. Again we have the testimony of God in Gen. 3:15; of the Lord Jesus Himself, Matt. 16:13; Luke 19:10 etc. (Son of Man used of Jesus 82 times in Scripture); of the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20. The prophets and apostles are in harmony in their statements, Is. 7:14; 11:1; Micah 5:1, compared with Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:5. Angels are heard from to the same effect, Luke 1:31; 32, 33; 2:11. His life and acts as related in the gospels clearly stamp Him true man.

These statements of the Scriptures are plain. Their meaning is unmistakable. Yet we are confronted by a great mystery that the mind of man cannot grasp. It is in faith that the Church and the individual Christians in it accept the truth that Jesus is both God and man. We follow Paul in confessing: "Without controversy . . . flesh."

But not all men bow before this mystery as did Paul. Many prefer to place reason above faith. Such were the scribes and the Pharisees and many others of their age and race. Their successors in our day are the Modernists, who may be willing to grant all other honors to Jesus except that He is man and God.

The Church and we stand with Paul and "without controversy" confess that Christ is God incarnate. To deny this mystery would mean to deny our holy faith, something which God may forfend.

But the Incarnation is not only a great mystery, it has also a very practical aspect.

2

The apostle speaks of the Incarnation as a "mystery of godliness," meaning that its result and object are our own godliness. By godliness is meant reverencing God and leading a life in conformity with His holy Law.

Even in man as he is by nature we still find a faint recollection that God requires holiness. The heathen, too, seek to attain a certain kind of godliness, Rom. 2:14, 15. Some have even reached a comparatively high plane of virtue, as, e. g., Socrates, Cicero, and others. And yet, viewed in the light of God's perfect holiness, what a caricature of true godliness even their highest attainments represent! They fall short of their goal, Rom. 3:23. To natural man, even at his best, applies Gen. 8:21, and all without exception must confess before God: Is. 64:6. Man cannot keep the whole Law, and the verdict Jas. 2:10 applies.

Where man has failed, God has provided. He sent His Son into the world in the form of man that He might show us the way to true godliness and also provide the means to attain it. Christ came to redeem man from the power of sin. The apostle in our text in bold outline presents His redemptive work, concluded with His being "received up into glory." What we could not do Jesus did for us. He fulfilled the Law, and He made atonement for our sins. If it had not been for His incarnation, He could not have done this for us. But now He is our Substitute. If we believe in Him and accept Him as such, our sin is covered, and in spite of our weak flesh we may attain a godliness such as is pleasing in the sight of God. Christ's active and passive obedience give us the power to become "saints." We may be sure that we are God's dear children and that His pleasure rests upon us.

Thus Christ's incarnation occupies the very center of our faith. May we never tire to marvel at this mystery, and may we through it be ever led to a life of greater godliness!

G. V. SCHICK

New Year's Eve

Heb. 13:14

As the last day of the year has ever been employed by business men and others in taking an inventory of stock and planning for the future, so it has been customary for Christians to use the last hours of the old year in a similar inventory, in taking stock of their spiritual standing and their progress in the knowledge of their salvation and sanctification. Our text suggests some valuable thoughts as we are assembled for the last time in the old year.

Admonition and Comfort for the Christian at the Close of the Year:

1. *"We have here no continuing city"*
2. *"But we seek one to come."*

1

The holy writer's remark brief and to the point, a reminder and an admonition to all who hear this word, and in particular also to us Christians.

a) There are many people who obviously are committed to the idea that this world and the things of this earth are the end and aim of their existence. They look upon this earth as their continuing city, as the place where they expect to abide forever or at least as long as life lasts, and this, they hope, will be very long, in order that they may enjoy what, they believe, this world has to offer. Their thoughts are summarized by the holy writer Is. 22:13. They foolishly believe that their indulgence in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life will give them true happiness. They are concerned about acquiring riches and honor and, like the people in the days of Noah, to be married and to be given in marriage, Matt. 24:38, to try all the plans of which Solomon speaks in Eccl. 1 and throughout that entire book as being emptiness, vanity, vexation, of spirit. Yet the world passeth away, 1 John 2:17.

b) Christians accept the word of our text as God's truth, supported also by the experience of all history: no continuing city here. They are strangers and pilgrims on this earth, Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11. They know that the earthly house of this tabernacle will soon be dissolved and that their true, eternal home is in heaven, 2 Cor. 5:1. They have learned to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. 3:2. They do indeed accept with grateful hearts such blessings as God may dispense to them while they are passing their sojourning here in fear, 1 Pet. 1:17. Their constant song is: "I'm but a stranger here: Heaven is my home." And therefore their comfort is in the second statement of our text.

2

The second part of our text gives us the consideration of a thought that is the very opposite of that contained in the first declaration.

a) Christians know that there is a city which is to come, that there is a place and a condition of bliss beyond death and the grave to which they may look forward with joyful anticipation. From eternity God has planned a deliverance from all evil for those who trust in the redeeming blood of His Son. The believers know

that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, 1 Pet. 1:5, that, in receiving the end of their faith and hope, they will experience in truth what St. John so vividly describes in the Book of Revelation, when he saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, Rev. 21:3-7. For we are told that there remaineth a rest to the people of God, Heb. 4:9, where they shall see their Savior face to face and be with Him in everlasting glory and majesty, Phil. 3:20, 21.

b) This being the case, and the Christians learning to put their trust ever more firmly in this truth as taught in the Word of God, they *seek* the city, the final redemption, which is to come, which will certainly be revealed. They follow the admonition of the apostle to know their Savior better from day to day and thus to attain to the resurrection of the dead, Phil. 3:9-11. They work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, always depending on the promise that the source of their strength is in God, Phil. 2:12, 13, who alone is able to assist them in making their calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1:10. Thus the Christian will, at the end of the year and every day of his life, be in readiness, so that, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory.

P. E. KRETZMANN



Miscellanea

Opening Address — Concordia Seminary

September 17, 1941

Dear Students of the Seminary, respected Members of the Faculty and of the Board of Control, kind Friends of our Institution:

In the name of the Triune God and lifting up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help, we begin today the new scholastic year of our Seminary, the one hundred and third year in the history of our institution. When we started our academic term two years ago, the second World War had just broken out, and the hope was expressed that such a serious and distressing situation in the world would come to an end before long and that the hour of world anguish would give way to the reestablishment of peace. Our hopes have not been realized, and it has pleased our God in His unsearchable wisdom and in His mysterious ways to continue this distressing situation, all on account of the grievous sins of humanity and the wilful and obstinate neglect and contempt of God, the Creator, Supreme Ruler, and Savior of the world. The times have even become more critical and perilous than they ever were before; we are living in constant jeopardy, not knowing but dreading what the next day will bring. But of this matter I shall not speak today, aside from making this brief reference to it. We can only pray and pray more assiduously, more unremittingly and fervently than ever before,

O God, from heaven look down and see
A sight which well may move Thee,

and pray that God in His mercy will speedily bring peace with justice to a stricken world.

But what shall we as Christians, as teachers and students of theology, do in this distressing world situation and condition aside from taking it earnestly and daily to our God in prayer? What is the office and purpose of our institution in such times as we are experiencing at present? Let us see to it that we follow the earnest and solemn admonition of St. Paul in his letters to the Thessalonians. Let us see to it that in these days of restlessness, of agitation, of excitement, "we study to be quiet and do our own business," "that with quietness" we work and be about our Father's business (1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:12; Luke 2:49). Permit me therefore to emphasize this purpose of our school in these turbulent days and at all times.

In looking for something else in Luther's writings during these days, I again came across a certain passage in his ever interesting table talk. There we are told (XXII, 358) that on a certain occasion when the doctor's degree was conferred on some one at the university in Wittenberg, Dr. Carlstadt, well known on account of his *Schwaermerei* and heretical opinions, objected to that academic custom and tried to prove his contention with the words of the Lord: "*Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*"

And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ, Matt. 23:8-11. It stands to reason that Christ in these words did not intend to forbid, as Carlstadt assumed, the Christian use of these terms: Rabbi, Father, Master, Teacher. Luther renders the sense of Christ's words properly in this way: "*You must not understand this passage as meaning: You shall not permit yourselves to be called Master, but thus: You shall not invent and devise a new doctrine, you shall not produce something new; but let it remain with what I have taught you and have commanded you to teach others and proclaim it to them.*" (XXII, 1529.) And in his sermons and writings he again and again recurs to this matter and says—to quote another significant passage—: "*Be satisfied with one Rabbi and let Christ be your Rabbi, your minister and bishop and preacher. You must all remain His disciples. He is Pope, (he is) Confessor, or Seelsorger, Preceptor and Schoolmaster.* (VII, 1144—1152.) And Luther is right in his exposition; for the words which are used in the original text, *ῥαββί, διδάσκαλος, καθηγητής*, Rabbi, Teacher, Guide, signify a teacher, a teacher in intellectual and spiritual matters. And therefore Christ emphasizes and inculcates this truth: All teaching in the Church, all authority and leadership among Christians in spiritual matters, belongs to Christ alone. He is the Teacher, the *Fuehrer* or Leader, the Master, or as Luther expresses it, "*der rechte, einige Meister*", "the one true Master."

This all-important truth applies to all ministers in their pulpit and pastoral work; it applies to all instructors in theology, to whom are committed the education and preparation of the future ministers of the Church; it applies to all students of divinity preparing for the service in the Church. There is a tendency nowadays to differentiate and to make a distinction. Some say, ministers and preachers should indeed be bound in their preaching and teaching by Christ's Word; but teachers of theology should be more independent and have the right of scientific investigation and thinking; and students of theology should be trained to follow in their footsteps. But no! This word of Christ, "*One is your Master, even Christ,*" is addressed just to the teachers and students of theology. It was called forth by the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees in Israel, who were sitting in Moses' seat, as Christ states at the beginning of His discourse; it applies to the "masters of Israel," as Christ calls one of them on another occasion. (John 3:10.) And His words are addressed to His disciples, the apostles, the teachers of Christendom. Upon these He impresses the necessity of their teaching being nothing else than the words and teachings of Christ, the Master. He is, as Luther says, the true Preceptor and Schoolmaster, also in theology, *He alone*. And the true independence in theology consists in this, that it considers itself bound solely by God and by Christ. That is the instruction and, at the same time, the promise which we as theologians receive from the Lord and Head of the Church: "*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:31, 32.) Our theology must not only be Christocentric, so that Christ and His work of redemption

is the beginning, middle, and end of all thoughts and meditations which we may have day and night, but it must be the theology of Christ Himself, so that we teach nothing else than what Christ Himself has taught and has commanded His disciples to observe. I do not stress at present the *high-priestly* office of Christ, according to which He is the one true Mediator and Savior, but I am stressing His *prophetic* office according to which He is the one great and true Teacher whom all should hear according to the will of the Father in heaven. We should teach what Christ has taught. Then we are true theologians.

But how can we know, know for sure, what Christ has taught? Rome answers this question and points to the so-called infallible Teacher of the Church on earth, the successor of St. Peter and vicar of Christ, the Pope. Through him Christ Himself speaks to man; the Pope is the highest authority in matters of doctrine; everything else, even the Bible, is subordinate to him. Christ is eliminated as Teacher. Modern theology, also the so-called conservative theology, thinks it hears Christ's voice in the personal, religious experience of the theologian. This is the so-called "*Erfahrungstheologie*" or "*Erlebnis-theologie*," the theology of experience. According to this theory only that is Christian doctrine which has been proved in the experience which the theologian himself has experienced. But also in this theory Christ is eliminated as the one true Master and Teacher. Human experience takes His place.

But no! If Christ is really to remain our one true Master and Teacher, if our theology is truly to be nothing else than Christ's theology, we must abide by the words of Holy Scripture, where alone in all the world we find Christ's Word. Christ Himself impresses that upon us again and again. After His resurrection He led the men who were to be His witnesses unto the uttermost part of the world into the Scriptures of the Old Testament and expounded to them these Scriptures. From the writings of Moses and the prophets He showed them and made them sure that He was the promised Messiah, who had to suffer and die for the sins of the world and rise again on the third day. Thereby He has fixed and ordained the Scriptures of the Old Testament as source and norm of doctrine in His Church. And to those apostles whom He led into the Scriptures, He promised and sent His Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth. He commissioned and ordained them as the teachers of all Christendom. He gave them the instruction: *Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matt. 28:20); and He characterizes His Church, for which He prays, as the community and sum total of those who would believe on Him through the word of these apostles. Thus the word of the apostles and prophets, or what is the same thing, the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament, is the firm and infallible foundation of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone. Through both of them, the apostles as well as the prophets, spoke the Spirit of Christ. And therefore all theology claiming to be true theology, claiming to be Christ's theology, must be grounded in all its doctrinal statements upon the inspired word of the prophets and apostles. The old axiom of our fathers: *Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum*, whatever is not

Biblical is not theological, must be maintained absolutely, without any giving way and crumbling, without any quibbling and equivocation.

I know well enough that what has been maintained in the preceding remarks is nothing new in the halls of this institution. It has been stated and is being stated again and again. But it seems to me that in these days of rapid changes we must stress the *fundamentals*. And on this opening day it should again be stated very emphatically that this is the theology that is to be taught and learned in these halls in the coming scholastic year. I invite you, my dear students, to study this theology with all diligence and fervor. I am addressing myself to you, my young friends, who are now entering upon your theological studies and are thereby beginning an entirely new and different period in your lives: I extend to you a most cordial and sincere welcome. May you all make the right beginning, may you all avail yourselves of the opportunities offered to you, and may God bless your studies from the very start. But I also say this to you who are returning to us for their second, for their third, and for their final year. You know what the study of theology is and implies, and I am anxious to exhort and encourage you with all the power that words can convey to devote your best efforts and abilities to the successful continuation of these studies. May you all with God's assistance and help comply with the purpose which our fathers laid down when they founded this institution and which their successors have upheld to the present day, namely, to educate a well-informed, a thoroughly indoctrinated, and a pious, God-fearing ministry for the needs of the Church.

Before closing I would like to make two announcements that must make us truly thankful to the Lord of the Church and the Giver of all good things. Our new professor-elect, Dr. Paul Bretscher, is with us; he will begin his teaching at once and will be formally installed in a special service tomorrow evening in Bethel Church. In behalf of the Faculty, of the student-body, and of the Board of Control I bid him a cordial welcome, and I am certain that all will join me in the wish and in the prayer that God according to His grace may bless him abundantly in his work and make him a blessing for our Church in general and for our institution in particular.

One of our professors, Dr. Walter A. Maier, has rounded out twenty-five years in the service of the Church and nineteen of these years as professor of theology in our Seminary. We all rejoice that the Lord has blessed him so richly in his work, and we implore the Head of the Church that He will continue to bless him; we say with David: *Thou blestest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever.* (1 Chron. 17:27.)

L. FUEBRINGER

Wuerttemberg Epistle Lessons

1. Advent	Rom. 14:17-19	Christmas	Eph. 1:3-8
2. Advent	Rom. 14:7-12	Second Christmas	Heb. 12:1-4
3. Advent	Acts 3:19-26	Sunday aft. Christmas	1 Tim. 3:16
4. Advent	1 John 1:1-4	New Year's Eve	Heb. 13:14

New Year's Day	2 Cor. 13:13	1. after Trinity	Acts 2:42-47
Sun. after New Year	1 Thess. 5:5-10	2. after Trinity	1 John 1:5 to 2:2
Epiphany	Isaiah 42:1-8	3. after Trinity	Acts 5:34-42
1. after Epiphany	Eph. 6:1-4	4. after Trinity	Acts 9:1-20
2. after Epiphany	Rom. 1:16-25	5. after Trinity	Phil. 3:8-14
3. after Epiphany	Rom. 5:1-5	6. after Trinity	Eph. 2:4-10
Septuagesima	Acts 9:36-42	7. after Trinity	Heb. 12:5-11
Sexagesima	Heb. 10:19-29	8. after Trinity	1 Tim. 6:6-10
Quinquagesima	2 Cor. 11:23-30	9. after Trinity	Acts 17:24-31
Invocavit	1 Pet. 1:17-25	10. after Trinity	1 Tim. 1:12-17
Reminiscere	James 1:2-12	11. after Trinity	James 2:13-17
Oculi	2 Cor. 1:3-7	12. after Trinity	Rom. 7:18 to 8:4
Laetare	Heb. 10:5-18	13. after Trinity	Phil. 2:1-11
Judica	2 Cor. 5:14-21	14. after Trinity	2 Pet. 1:2-11
Easter	1 Cor. 15:1-20	15. after Trinity	1 John 2:12-17
Easter Monday	1 Cor. 15:51-58	16. after Trinity	1 John 2:28 to 3:8
1. after Easter	2 Tim. 2:1-13	17. after Trinity	Heb. 4:9-13
2. after Easter	Rev. 7:13-17	18. after Trinity	1 John 4:7-12
3. after Easter	Acts 4:18-20	19. after Trinity	James 3:13-18
4. after Easter	1 Thess. 2:9-13	20. after Trinity	1 Tim. 2:1-6
5. after Easter	1 Tim. 6:11-16	21. after Trinity	1 Cor. 15:35-50
Ascension	Heb. 4:14-16	22. after Trinity	2 Cor. 4:11-18
6. after Easter	Col. 3:1-10	23. after Trinity	Rev. 21:1-8
Pentecost	Acts 2:32-41	24. after Trinity	Heb. 11:1-10
Pentecost Monday	1 Cor. 2:7-16	25. after Trinity	James 4:4-10
Trinity	Titus 3:4-8		

NOTE: The Wuertemberg Series does not offer special texts for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Reformation Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Day of Repentance. We have asked our contributors to choose appropriate texts.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

A Recent Catholic Explanation of Genesis 3:15

All those who are familiar with the Roman Catholic use of this text are aware of the fact that both in the antichristian theology and in the whole field of liturgics this text has been consistently used according to the translation of the Vulgate, stressing the *ipsa* and commonly declaring it to refer to the Virgin Mary.

It is interesting to note, however, that some Roman Catholic scholars are honest enough to admit the error of the Vulgate translation. (Cp. the article on the Latin Bible, CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., IV, 184-189.) The most recent article in this field of which we have knowledge appeared in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (July, 1941, 225 f.), from which we quote:

"(Protoevangelium) — I place enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed.
It shall crush your head
And you shall bruise its heel.

"The curse of God not only imprecates the evil, but effects it. It is not to be conceived that prior to the curse the serpent walked otherwise or ate otherwise, but that which was natural to the serpent becomes a sign of malediction; a perpetual reminder of the sin and the par-

ticipation of the serpent in it. Irrational animals are subject to punishment elsewhere in the Old Testament. (Gen. 9:5; Ex. 21:28 f.; Lev. 20:15 f.). Those who consider the serpent a real one and not an apparent one apply v. 14 literally to the serpent, figuratively to Satan; 'to go about upon the stomach' signifies to be vile and contemptible (Lev. 11:42); 'to eat (or lick) the dust' signifies to be humiliated, conquered (Is. 49:23; Amarna Letters). For those who consider the serpent a mere apparition, a form that Satan assumed, the words apply primarily to Satan, but in the metaphorical sense, *humiliatio perpetua ac despectus universalis*. (Ceuppens, *De Historia Primaeva*, Rome, 1934, p. 180.)

"V. 15. *Text.* — The Vulgate (cf. Douay Version) has in this verse *ipsa*. This reading gives rise to two distinct questions. (1) Is this the genuine reading of the Vulgate? (2) What is the genuine reading of the original text? As to the first question; the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Vulgate working according to the critical principles of Dom Quentin has given in the edition of Genesis the reading *ipsa*. (*Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam Vulgatam editionem*. Genesis, 1926). According to the Commission then this is the word that Jerome wrote in his edition of the Latin Version. As to the second question: the MT has *hu'* referring to the masculine preformative, and the suffix (referring to *hu'*) of the next verb is in the masculine. From the viewpoint of textual criticism there can be no doubt that the reading of the MT is *hu'* and not *hi'* (fem.). All the codices of the LXX read αὐτός, referring it to οὐτέqua; the translation is rather *secundum sensum* than *ad verbum*. The translators understood it to refer to the Messias. Grammatically exact would be αὐτό. The Latin Version Itala (Old Latin) has *ipse*; the Syrian Peschitta has *hu'*; the Samaritan Pentateuch has *hu'*; S. Jerome in *Quest. Hebr. in Gen.* has *ipse* (PL 23, 991). These substantiate the reading of the MT and decide the question. The original reading was *hu'*; the translation, 'It (the seed) shall crush your head.' P. E. K.

The "Lost Sixty Years"

With reference to Luther's statement "Here, in the case of Abraham, sixty years are lost" (I:721), quoted in *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XII, p. 359, and repeated p. 409, one of our readers, Pastor W. G., writes the following:

"Wer beim Ueberlesen von Gen. 11, 26 bis 12, 4 nicht gruendlich nachrechnet, weil er wie Luther dazu keine Zeit hat, findet allerdings, dass irgendwo in Tharahs und Abrahams Leben ueber 60 Jahre scheinbar keine Auskunft gegeben wird. Rechnen wir nun aber einmal vom Endpunkt zurueck: Abraham war 75 Jahre alt, als er aus Haran zog, Gen. 12, 4. Tharah starb in Haran im Alter von 205 Jahren, Gen. 11, 32. Offenbar ist die Meinung des Textes, dass Abraham nach Tharahs Tode Haran verliess und zu der Zeit 75 Jahre alt war. Geboren wurde Abraham demnach, als Tharah das 130. Jahr ueberschritten hatte.

"Hiergegen wird Gen. 11, 26 als Einwurf zitiert, wonach Tharah als 70jaehriger Abraham, Nahor und Haran zeugte. Will nun das besagen, dass just damals alle drei Soehne Tharahs geboren wurden? Doch wohl nicht, sondern der Text kehrt nur hervor, dass vor dem Termin

keiner der drei Soehne von Tharah gezeugt wurde. Keine distinkte Auskunft gibt jedoch der Text darueber, welcher der drei der Erstgeborne war und wann die andern gezeugt wurden. *Erschliessen* laesst sich indes aus Gen. 11, 32 verglichen mit 12, 4, dass Abraham nicht der Aelteste war, sondern erst geboren wurde, als Tharah 130 Jahre alt geworden war (und dann gehen im Leben Tharahs keine 60 Jahre verloren). Darauf deutet auch, dass nach Gen. 11, 27—29 Haran der Vater des Lot und seiner Schwestern Milka und Jiska war und starb, noch ehe Tharah mit Abraham und Lot Ur in Chaldaea verliess. Haran muss demnach ein ganz Teil aelter als Abraham gewesen sein. Und somit gewinnt obige Deutung Grund und Boden unter den Fuesen.

“Die Geschichtsdarstellung macht ganz den Eindruck, dass Haran, Gen. 11, 26, unter Tharahs Soehnen darum an letzter Stelle steht, weil von ihm gleich weiter erzaehlt wird und damit seine Geschichte sozusagen zum Abschluss kommt. Abraham aber wird unter den Soehnen Tharahs an die erste Stelle gerueckt, weil er in der weiteren Erzaehlung die Hauptperson abgeben sollte. Denn auch von Abrahams Bruder Nahor wird nur mitgeteilt, dass er wie auch Abraham ein Weib nahm, und viel spaeter wird eine kurze Nachricht ueber Soehne des Nahor nachgetragen, Gen. 22, 20—24. Unentschieden bleibt noch, ob Abraham aelter war als Nahor oder nicht.

“Die erwaehte Erzaehlungsweise findet sich auch sonst in der Schrift, z. B. in der Geschichte Noahs. Nach Gen. 5, 32 war Noah 500 Jahre alt und zeugte Sem, Ham und Japhet. Vgl. Gen. 6, 1; 9, 18; 10, 1; 1 Chron. 1, 4. Auch diese waren nicht Drillinge. Japhet wird ebenfalls zuletzt genannt, weil bald darauf seine Geschichte zum Abschluss kommt, Gen. 10, 1—5. Unmittelbar folgt hier, Gen. 10, 6—20, Hams Geschichte, ebenfalls abschliessend, um Sems Geschichte als die Hauptsache der Erzaehlung einzufuehren und fortzuspinnen. Hier nun findet sich eine ausdrueckliche Altersangabe: Ham heisst gegenueber seinen Bruedern Noahs kleiner, d. h. wohl juengster, Sohn, Gen. 9, 24. Und betreffs des Alters Sems und Japhets entscheidet Gen. 10, 21, wo zu uebersetzen ist: ‘Sem, der aeltere Bruder Japhets.’ Vgl. Gen. 11, 10 mit 7, 6 und 5, 32. Das im Hebraeischen nachgestellte Adjektiv ‘der aeltere’ gehoert eben zu Sem. Vgl. Ges. 126, 5 (Beispiele: ‘das Werk Jehovahs, das grosse,’ Deut. 11, 7; ‘die Knechte meines Herrn, die geringen,’ Jes. 36, 9). Josephus reiht Ant. I, 4. 1 Noahs Soehne so auf: ‘Sem, Japhet, Ham.’ Aber die Reihenfolge der Soehne Tharahs mag die gewesen sein: Haran, 60 Jahre spaeter: Abraham und dann (vielleicht von einem anderen Weibe): Nahor. Vgl. Jos. 24, 2 (und Sarah, Gen. 20, 12).”

See also Arndt, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?*, page 16: “There (Gen. 11:26) Abram is mentioned first. That may be due to his having been the first-born. But it may just as well have had some other reason, for instance, that Abram was the most prominent one of the sons of Terah and hence is given the first place in the list. If we assume, as we may well do, that Abraham was the youngest of the three brothers named, and that he was born when his father was 130 years old, his age at the time of his father’s death was seventy-five.”

The “lost sixty years,” it would seem, have been found.

E.

Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Is the Pope of Rome the Antichrist?—Under this heading the *Australian Lutheran* (July 11, 1941) writes: "The question should really be, Is he the 'man of sin' referred to in 2 Thess. 2:3? For some reason the 'man of sin' referred to by St. Paul has always been identified with the Antichrist to whom St. John refers [1 John 2:18]. . . . Assuming that they are identical, are the marks of them found in the Roman Papacy? Luther and the Lutheran Church have always held that they are. In the Smalcald Articles the Lutheran Church states: 'This teaching shows forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against, Christ.' And again: 'On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist.' In view of such an official statement it is rather astounding that our contemporary the *Lutheran Herald*, in its issue of July 7, boldly asserts that 'it seems contrary to the truth to designate the Pope the very Antichrist,' and this for the reason that the Papacy still upholds the doctrine of the Trinity and of the divinity of Christ. Luther had no quarrel with the Pope on account of these doctrines; nevertheless he stated: 'Therefore know that the Pope is the veritable, true, final Antichrist of whom all the Scriptures speak, whom the Lord has already commenced to consume with the Spirit of His mouth and whom He will very soon destroy with the brightness of His coming.' That Luther held because the Pope opposes the doctrine of justification by faith as taught in the Gospel. And the eminent theologians of the Lutheran Church are in agreement with Luther. Even the mild-hearted Spener says: 'This [that the Pope is the antichrist] is an article to which our Church in the Smalcald Articles expressly confesses adherence, and it is not permissible for us to give up this truth; and the more we have to fear that this Roman Babel will pour out its final rage upon us, the more it is necessary for us to be grounded and strengthened in this knowledge that we may learn to beware of it.' And in his *Commentary of the New Testament* the late Dr. R. C. H. Lenski, of the American Lutheran Church, says: 'What obstructs the vision of so many and leads them to deny that the Pope is the Antichrist is a failure to appreciate in their person the fact that justification by faith alone is the soul and center of all that is true Christianity. All other doctrines have their roots in this one.' He goes on to quote the Decrees of the Council of Trent, the confession of faith of the Romanists, where in condemnation of Luther's teaching the papists say: 'If any one should have said that men are justified either alone through imputation of the righteousness of Christ or through the forgiveness of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and love which the Holy Ghost has poured into their hearts and which dwell in them, and that the grace by which we are justified is alone the good will of God, let him be accursed.' Now, the conclusion that the head of an organization that pronounces a curse on the plain teachings of St. Paul and the whole of Scripture, notwith-

standing he, for historical reasons, still champions the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, is Antichrist, is surely one that ought not to be objected to. The late Pastor Kavel was desirous of making some corrections to the Lutheran confessions of faith, but he never found fault with what they have to say concerning the Papacy."

We quote this as a striking testimony (rendered in a truly evangelical way) from brethren living thousands of miles away, yet facing the same problem as we do in our own country. There are many factors today that move thoughtful men to "rethink" the historical position of our Church regarding Antichrist. Never since the Dark Ages has the "falling away" from the *sola fide* been as complete and general as it is today; work-righteousness is the preeminent doctrine not only of renegade Romanism, but also of renegade Protestantism. Why, then, should the Pope be the "man of sin"? Never, too, has there been such fierce and wide-spread opposition to the *sola gratia* as we find today. Why, then, should the Pope be the "son of perdition"? In addition, never before has the Roman Church appeared so saintly and Christian as it does today, upholding, apparently, the historical creeds of the Christian faith with amazing emphasis and testifying against the manifestly anti-Christianisms of our time with laudable earnestness. Lastly, practically all confessing Christians within Calvinistic circles are millennialists and repudiate the doctrine that the Pope is the very Antichrist. We must therefore not become impatient if today the decision of our Church, made at a time when Rome seemingly was at its worst, is submitted to critical scrutiny even in Lutheran circles. And yet, during all the four hundred years that passed by since the Reformation restored the true Gospel, nothing has occurred in Romanism to prove that Luther and his coworkers erred in their Christian judgment of the Papacy. Rome's detestation of the *sola fide* manifests itself in its recent Revised New Testament as clearly as it does in the Decrees of the Council of Trent; and the "vermin-brood of manifold idolatries, begotten by the dragon's tail, the Mass" (*Trigl.*, p. 465) is revered as much in modern refined Rome as it was in medieval crude Rome. As some one has said: "Rome still stands today as the ecclesiastical hypocrite *par excellence* in Christendom."

J. T. M.

Professor G. J. Fritschel Deceased. — From Dubuque, Iowa, the news has been sent out that Dr. Geo. J. Fritschel, well known to many members of our Synod through his participation in efforts to establish unity, on October 5 departed this life. He was the son of Professor Gottfried Fritschel, one of the founders of the Iowa Synod and until his death professor at the Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque. The son, who has now entered eternal rest, first served for a number of years as pastor, and then he was called to a professorship at the same seminary at which his father had taught. His chief field of theological interest was symbolics and church history. Several books which he issued either alone or in collaboration with others deal with subjects pertaining to this sphere. In the endeavors to arrive at unity of doctrine with the Synodical Conference, he showed great interest and in the twenties was one of the chief spokesmen of the Iowa Synod. His pamphlets were given

wide dissemination. In the presentation of the doctrine of election it was he who more than anybody else emphasized the so-called *a-posteriori* treatment of this doctrine. We personally always regarded him as a theologian who earnestly endeavored to bring about a union of the various Lutheran church-bodies on the only proper foundation: the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. A number of years ago he suffered a paralytic stroke, which made it impossible for him to continue his work as professor. His physical disability he bore with exemplary Christian patience and fortitude. He was born in 1867 and became a member of the Wartburg Seminary faculty in 1906. A.

Lutheran Consciousness.—In the *Lutheran Standard* Dr. G. C. Gast, submitting recollections pertaining to Dr. C. C. Hein, the first president of the American Lutheran Church, includes the following significant paragraph in his article:

"Later he often lamented the fact that so many of his brethren did not seem to take their ministry as seriously as they should, that they were inclined to be lazy and slipshod in their teaching and their preaching, and that they seemed to have so much time for things that he never found it possible to do. Above all, he deplored the fact that apparently they were losing their Lutheran consciousness, that their sermons no longer had that Lutheran ring, and that their practice was not thoroughly Lutheran. This he attributed in a great measure to the circumstance that they read so much non-Lutheran literature and neglected to study the Lutheran Confessions and the other literary masterpieces of Lutheranism from which he himself drew so freely."

Our comment is that the American Lutheran Church is not the only Lutheran body which should ponder the views here ascribed to Dr. Hein.

A.

"The United Lutheran Church Has Moved Away from the 'Pure Thinking' of the Older Orthodoxy."—This is a statement which the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* (October, 1941) makes in an article entitled "Albrecht Ritschl in Modern Thought." The writer points out that such Neo-Lutherans in Germany as Karl Heim, P. Althaus, and others, as also the theologians of Lund, Sweden, have been greatly influenced by Ritschl's "emphasis on value" (cf. Ritschl's distinction between *Seinsurteil*, actual value, and *Werturteil*, estimated value), which lies at the basis of dialectic theology, whose premises these theologians share. For them to know God is to know Him "existentially." What that means in particular the writer shows by way of illustration when he says: "Althaus consistently emphasizes that in the Bible we have the truth in 'earthen vessels' (which means that the Bible is not God's inspired, and, therefore, not infallible Word, but a mixture of divine revelation and of human speculation). The Scriptures do not give us any information as to the 'ages of rocks,' but they are *dynamis theou* (power of God) to bring us to the 'Rock of Ages.' The Neo-Lutherans, therefore, are not apologists in the older meaning of the term. They do not write books on Christian apologetics as our own L. Keyser of Springfield, who fought a noble but losing battle against the encroachment of natural science and historical criticism on religion. *It seems that the United*

Lutheran Church has moved away from the 'pure thinking' of the older orthodoxy towards an appreciation — as we hope — of existential thinking and not toward a Neo-Kantian agnosticism [italics our own]. But the older type of orthodoxy is by no means dead in America. It is a vital force in American Fundamentalism as well as in some Lutheran bodies. We, therefore, feel that all negotiations for Lutheran unity will fail so long as the other Lutheran bodies continue to reject in principle the existential interpretation of the Scriptures. To a theologian thinking existentially, a Lutheran is one who confesses God to be the Maker of heaven and earth, to whom every human being is responsible and who says with Luther: 'I believe that Jesus Christ has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature.' But to the Missouri Synod, for instance, belief in God involves the intellectual agreement that He has created the world in the 'manner' stated in Genesis, i. e., within six days of twenty-four hours each and that sin came into the world 'as described in Genesis 3' " (the words in quotation marks refer to our *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*). "To the former, unity of faith means primarily fellowship of those who have experienced the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus; to the latter it means, above all, agreement in the intellectual apprehension of doctrine. There is no VIA MEDIA between these two views. Consequently no committee will ever succeed in establishing Lutheran unity unless the one party is willing to surrender its premises in favor of the other or rather in favor of the truth [italics our own]."

Concerning the doctrine of creation as stated in the *Brief Statement*, the writer says: "These sentences ['We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the whole world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less out of itself'] imply a confusion of two different principles, of evolution as a descriptive form of nature and of evolution as a causal force inherent in nature. It goes without saying that Christian theology cannot subscribe to the latter, whereas we can see no reason why the Church should oppose, or even deny, within certain limits, the validity of the former." Practically, this means that the Christian Church must reject atheistic evolution, while it may (or perhaps should) teach theistic evolution, i. e., the theory that evolution was God's way of creating this world. As a matter of fact, the Bible rejects both the theistic and atheistic evolution and teaches direct divine creation, as declared in the *Brief Statement*.

But the matter here discussed deserves more detailed consideration. The writer of the article on Ritschl, of course, does not speak in the name of the entire United Lutheran Church. We know definitely that a large number of ministers in the U. L. C. A. do not think existentially, but cling to the "pure thinking of the older orthodoxy," confessing not only the *sola gratia*, but also the *sola Scriptura*. But it is true that the group which represents the *Quarterly* yields somewhat to the Ritschlian and, in particular, Barthian (dialectic) delusion, which does away with

practically everything which orthodox Lutheranism has ever taught concerning the inspiration, the inerrancy, and the authority of Holy Scripture. And the writer speaks very correctly when he says that there is no *via media* between the United Lutheran Neo-theologs and the orthodox Lutherans in our country who still take such passages as 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; John 10:35; 1 Cor. 2:13, and many others teaching verbal and plenary inspiration, seriously. But the writer is wrong when he says that to the Missourians unity of faith means *above all agreement in the intellectual apprehension of doctrine*, while to the United Lutheran Liberal it means primarily fellowship of those who have experienced the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. To the Missourian "fellowship of those who have experienced [sic?] the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus" is extremely important; for only those who have experienced the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus are children of God and so members of the Christian Church (the *una sancta*). But how can any one experience the grace of God in Christ Jesus apart from the Word of God, and how can we keep this Word if the Bible is robbed of its reliability? If the United Lutheran Liberals are so very fond of some of the views of Albrecht Ritschl, let them remember that he did not accept Christ's deity and vicarious atonement and the *sola fide* as essential to Christian fellowship, and from the premise of his theological system he did this consistently. Karl Barth does not go quite as far as did Ritschl, but if he halts before the modernistic precipice of denying the Christian truth, it is only because of a "fortunate inconsistency." Brunner, more scholarly, more logical, and more recondite than Barth, does not follow his master in this "fortunate inconsistency" but boldly espouses the "unfortunate consistency" of absolute Modernism. Dr. Reu, in rebuking certain liberal errorists in his own communion, writes in the October issue of the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* (p. 607): "Aber weiss der Schreiber denn gar nichts davon, dass es Missouri und uns ums Wort Gottes und sein Verstaendnis geht, und dass das Wort Gottes die hoechste Majestaet ist, die es auf Erden gibt?" This is a fitting rebuke also for the present writer on Albrecht Ritschl in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, who ignores the fact that whatever Missourian and other orthodox theologians have written in this controversy regarding inspiration and kindred subjects, has been written only to preserve intact and inviolate the Word of God with all its specific teachings. The history of Christian doctrine proves that wherever the *sola Scriptura* has been repudiated, there also the *sola gratia* was no longer esteemed and confessed. Liberalism, which overthrows the Bible, must of necessity overthrow also its central doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of Christ. The battle for the Bible is the battle for the preservation of the foundation of our Christian faith. J. T. M.

New Effort to Unite the Northern Presbyterians and the Episcopalians.—On this topic the *Christian Century* (undenominational) reports in an editorial as follows: "The commissions which are conducting the negotiations for union of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. and the Protestant Episcopal Church have submitted a new proposal to those two bodies. They outline a method by which joint ordination

might be provided for those entering the ministry in the two churches. In the course of time, they suggest, the process of joint ordination would render unimportant the issue of clerical orders on which the previous negotiations have stalled and thus would make possible consummation of that organic unity of the two churches to which both are committed. 'It is agreed that in future,' says the new proposal, 'ordinations within either church of men to be set aside for the ministry as presbyters or priests (which are regarded as words of the same meaning within the scope of this agreement) shall be by the method of joint ordination herein set forth.' This method provides for ordination by an Episcopal bishop 'and the presbytery in the area in which the ordination shall take place,' with both bishop and clergy designated by the presbytery joining 'in the laying on of hands.' This ordination 'shall include, or be preceded by, a declaration on the part of the ordinand of conformity to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church in which he is to be ordained, and of due regard for the doctrine and discipline of the other church.' The service is to be followed by a celebration of the communion, 'a presbyter or bishop who has received joint ordination acting as celebrant.' 'Every minister so jointly ordained shall be eligible to minister the Word and Sacraments in either church,' and may transfer from presbytery to diocese or from diocese to presbytery without reordination. 'This agreement,' the proposal concludes, 'is to be regarded as an interim step toward organic unity between the two churches, and it is hoped that the gradual growth of a joint ministry, joint parishes and missions, and perhaps even joint presbyteries and dioceses, may bring about better mutual understanding and fellowship, and lead toward further steps until, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the two churches may become one church, in the fellowship of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic church which is the body of Christ.'" The cause of division between these two church-bodies has been chiefly man-made doctrines, that of the episcopal succession and that of the divine origin of the presbyterial organization of the church. It is a pity that the human origin of these distinctive doctrines is not recognized. A.

Union of Church and State Advocated by a Prominent British Clergyman. — According to *America* (Roman Catholic), the Rev. Nathaniel Micklem, Principal of Mansfield College located in Oxford, England, a Congregationalist school, made some disturbing suggestions in a meeting of laymen which he addressed in this country. He is quoted to have said, "The State has been actually Christian, but nominally free. Now Christianity is no longer the accepted religion. There are new fanatical religions, such as National Socialism and Communism, which are actively antichristian. That is the new situation in Europe. There cannot be a religiously neutral education. If we do not inculcate Christianity in the schools, we will inculcate materialist, communist, nationalist, or Nazi outlooks. Education is a field in which Church and State must cooperate." We do not think that Dr. Micklem correctly describes the situation when he says that education is either Christian or antichristian. His remarks are too sweeping. The solution which

he seeks is to be found not in a union of Church and State as far as education is concerned, but in schools operated by churches, like our so-called Christian day-school. The remedy which he proposes would, in the last analysis, deprive us of religious liberty and reintroduce an era of spiritual oppression. A.

After Sixteen Years.—Ernest Gordon, in the *Sunday-school Times* (non-denominational), under this title, reports the following: "This is the title of a report in *Inland Africa* by Mr. Kenneth Richardson, which describes the results of his prayer and work. He says: "We remember the moonlight nights when first we came here, when sleep was impossible on account of the throb of the drums and the songs and yells of drunken dancers. Those things are seldom heard now. The fetishes which were worn by all have disappeared. The very few witch doctors still in practice are ashamed to carry on their trade in public; quite a number are now members of the Church here. The rising generation is almost entirely literate, having learned to read at one or another of our sixty bush schools in connection with our rural chapels. There they have all been taught to read the New Testament and have heard the Gospel preached daily. We estimate that about six thousand New Testaments are in circulation, and during the past year we have sold over twelve hundred in addition to very many other Scripture portions. It is given to few in these days to start from the very beginning and see a Church of seven hundred built up in sixteen years. And there are at present thirty-seven hundred others attending classes for instruction with a view to Baptism. The native offerings during 1939 amounted to about \$450, an enormous amount when one considers the extreme poverty of these people. Every person in the district has had the Gospel preached to him repeatedly, and there are rural chapels in reach of all. From this well-evangelized district we go to one of the most primitive parts of Kenya Colony."

This report shows that the Gospel is still "a power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," Rom. 1:16, and that there are still men who in the spirit of St. Paul and the other apostles are willing to carry it to those living in spiritual darkness. There is a ring of triumph in the words: "From this well-evangelized district we go to one of the most primitive parts of Kenya Colony," reflecting Paul's own triumphant missionary spirit in Rom. 15:28: "When, therefore, I have performed this and have sealed them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." The *Sunday-school Times* records another instance of such triumphant missionary spirit. First it quotes renegade Prof. F. C. Grant of Union Theological Seminary as saying in his Haskell Lectures delivered in the School of Theology of liberal Oberlin College: "The claim to be Messiah was, we believe, never made by Jesus, but appears to be the reflection of the early Church's belief. The kingship belonged solely to God. There was no room for a Messianic king. To put it plainly, for Jesus to claim himself to be the head of God's kingdom, after all He had said in his public teaching about the divine rule, would have been nothing short of blasphemy." Then it tells us how a distribution of the gospel of John to the 4,566 students in the University of Southern California

has been made jointly by students of Wheaton College and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. With each copy went a little letter commending the book as the inspired Word of God and guide to salvation. Students of the Bible Institute attended to the distribution. "No sooner had the books been sent," reports the *King's Business*, "than the return mail was flooded with replies from University of California students. On the card provided many students checked the line which read: 'I wish to know more about God's plan of free salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.' No time was lost by BIOLA students in visiting these and making plain the way of salvation to some who had never considered it. Other replies were daily received as a result of this distribution." Such accounts should encourage us to continue in the proclamation of the Gospel. Are we using every opportunity we have of witnessing to Christ?

J. T. M.

What Is Christianity? — The *Watchman-Examiner* (March 27, 1941) discusses editorially the Lyman Beecher Lectures for 1939, delivered at Yale University by Dr. C. Morrison, editor of the *Christian Century*, which have now appeared in a book entitled *What Is Christianity?* Answering the question "What is Dr. Morrison's definition of Christianity?" the editorial says: "One gathers the impression that history is to Dr. Morrison what the Bible is to the Fundamentalist. As the latter believes the Word of God to be inspired throughout, so the former takes as his inspired conviction not any particular event in history but the 'historical continuum in which it occurred.'" It next quotes Dr. Morrison as saying: "The heresy of Protestantism consisted in the fact that it transferred the locus of both revelation and salvation altogether outside of the community. The locus of revelation is placed in the Bible. A revelation in history must be of the substance of history. The Bible cannot qualify as the revelation because it is not of the substance of history. It is not the historical revelation." Commenting on this statement, the editorial goes on: "Rejecting the Bible, therefore, as the historical revelation prepared for, preserved unto, and providentially bestowed on, man by God, Dr. Morrison is driven back to 'perceiving the revelation of God in specific events.' To get at the divine continuum, he must study history—such as is known—and place events as they have occurred before the bar of his judgment. We feel this would inevitably require an omniscience we would never wish to assert and lead us to a search for the sinister in past and current events that we would not regard as healthy. God has not yet made us the judge of all the earth. It seems to us that loyalty to the Bible, which Dr. Morrison regretfully refers to as 'heresy,' has been and is today the vital foundation of evangelical Christianity, the principal factor in its continuance, and the means for the enlightenment of the followers of Christ, past and present. This enlightenment he defines as 'psychological' Christianity. He asserts, 'Not the Bible, but the living Church, the body of Christ, is the true Word of God.' But this is like saying that an effect negatives its cause, which is not true. Such a cause and such an effect cannot be set opposite to each other. 'Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.' The Bible was given by inspiration of God to deliver us

from self-assumed omniscience, to save us from self-sufficient pride and its sinister moods, to preserve us from mental, moral, and spiritual exhaustion in a futile search to find out God. It was bestowed to 'make us wise unto salvation.' To regard it, as Dr. Morrison does, as a problem of psychology and its doctrines as only ideologies of confusion would be to remove the one sure base on which evangelical Christianity can unite and be happily blessed of God. The Bible alone is a common base for our faith." This is only a part of the fine editorial, but it shows sufficiently that there are still enough believing and confessing Christians left in the churches of our country to expose the falsehoods of liberal impostors; and this in a periodical which is intended for the common people.

J. T. M.

Gültigkeit von Taufen. Auf Anfragen wegen Behandlung nicht trinitarisch vollzogener Taufen stellte der Evangelische Oberkirchenrat fest: Grundsätzlich sind als ordnungsmäßig vollzogene Taufen nur solche anzusehen, die auf den Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes geschehen. Die Taufe ist ein Sakrament und „göttlich Wortzeichen“, also ein Handeln des dreieinigen Gottes durch sein Wort mit und bei dem äußeren Zeichen. Kirchenrechtlich ist die trinitarische Taufe die überall allein anerkannte christliche Taufe; sie ist zugleich, praktisch und rechtlich, das ökumenische christliche Einheitsband. Eine Taufe kann als christliche nur anerkannt werden, wenn der glaubhafte Nachweis des ordnungsmäßigen Vollzugs erbracht ist. Die ordnungsmäßige Vornahme der Taufe durch den zuständigen landeskirchlichen Geistlichen oder einen durch Dimissoriale ermächtigten Geistlichen ist Voraussetzung für einen Eintrag in die Kirchenbücher.

(Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung)

Brief Items.—According to the church press the University of Southern California, located at Los Angeles, has announced that for the first time a course on the principles of Lutheranism will be offered this year. The lecturer will be one of our brethren, the Rev. C. W. Berner of Los Angeles, Calif. Churches whose principles have been presented in former years are the Roman Catholic, the Episcopalian, the Greek Orthodox, and the Mormon. The Jews, too, have had an opportunity of presenting their religion.

Under the direction of Dr. Henry Einsbruch, who is in charge of Jewish mission activity in the United Lutheran Church, the first Yiddish New Testament to be published in our country has been produced. It was gotten out in Baltimore, Maryland.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has announced that all its missionaries have now been withdrawn from Japan, leaving the Congregational churches without missionary work in that country for the first time in 72 years.

The American Bible Society lately received an enormous order from the British and Foreign Bible Society. The latter requests that one million Portuguese gospels be printed and placed at its disposal.

"Few preachers use rhetoric or gesture today." A writer in the *Church Times* makes this observation in some notes upon present-day

preachers. He says their characteristics are far slighter than in the past, from which he takes Joseph Parker as a striking example. . . . The Archbishop of York stands stock still and trusts to his touch with the congregation. . . . There is little doubt that the radio has affected the style of preaching. The radio does not lend itself to rhetoric; the preacher must make the voice do all that in former days gesture and facial expression used to do. The radio may also tend to increase the demand for shorter sermons."—*Edward Shillito, in the Christian Century.*

Catholic Action has been defined as essentially "the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy." Cardinal Maglione, Papal Secretary of State, in his letter of July 24 addressed to the Rev. J. P. Archambault, S. J., president of the *Semaines Sociales* of Canada, recalls the further explanation of the nature of Catholic Action given by the present Pontiff in his Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* and adds the more specific characterization: "Catholic Action is a strongly organized collaboration, differentiated according to the different categories of persons to be reached, in close union with the Bishops and their ecclesiastical auxiliaries, to whom the apostolic mandate has been specially entrusted." The application of these principles, adds Cardinal Maglione, and their adaptation to a world in perpetual disturbance, demands continual study and toil.—*America* (Roman Catholic).

America (Jesuit weekly) writes: "Luther thought he would put religion in the vaults of private judgment for safekeeping. He argued, It is not safe with Rome. . . . The followers of Luther have for the most part lost their religion." What are the facts? The Pope said, "Follow Rome." Luther said, "Follow Christ." He added that this is such a sacred matter that its performance cannot be turned over to anybody else. How can any one who is loyal to the Scriptures take a different course?

A unique piece of work is done by the members of the Pioneer Mission Agency of Philadelphia. The announcement says, "Thirty-seven people are living this year in the most inaccessible regions of Mexico and are working with eighteen Indian tribes. Their work is mostly Bible translation." So reports a correspondent in the *Christian Century*.

Attorney General McKittrick of Missouri has thrown a monkey-wrench into plans to launch classes in religious education among four thousand children in the Kansas City elementary schools. He has ruled that pupils may not be dismissed during school hours to attend such classes. The new plan was scheduled to go into effect October 13.—*Christian Century.* A.

Corrigenda

On page 813 (November issue), footnote 117, line 4, read "Jeans" for "Jesus."

On page 823 footnote 126 should read: "It is a well-grounded hypothesis"—is it really?

